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ABSTRACT

This resource booklet, one of the three components that make up the Building Better Career Futures (BBCF) program, provides information on theories and approaches of BBCF; articles on themes of the program; and group activities addressing the specific career development outcomes of BBCF. This booklet is organized into four parts. The first part, "Understanding Career Development," includes icebreaker activities; discusses the role of the career development facilitator; group career development; a new career development paradigm; and the current status of career development. This part also presents a lecturette, "The High Five Messages," which includes a workshop leader's guide and exercises to accompany the lecturette. Part 2, "Opportunities in the Labour Market," includes several group and networking activities; information that provides a foundation for successful career development, information concerning Megatrends--a hybrid approach; career information resources and self-help tools; and commonly asked questions. Part 3, "Opportunities for Me," discusses the workforce in transition and provides constructivist counseling information and activities. The final section, "Taking Charge," is a reprint of an article, "Positive Uncertainty: A New Decision-Making Framework for Counselling" (H. B. Gelatt). (MKA)

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Building Better Career Futures

Backgrounder

by
Lynne Bezanson
and
Sareena Hopkins

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Building Better Career Futures - Backgrounder

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Backgrounder

To the facilitator . . .

The **Backgrounder** is your resource. It is intended to support you in your delivery of the **Building Better Career Futures** program by providing you with:

- chapters with additional information on a theory or approach used in **BBCF**;
- articles on the themes of the program; and
- alternative group activities addressing the specific career development outcomes of **BBCF**.

On the cover sheet of each section in the **Facilitator Guide**, you'll note that you're directed to specific pages in the **Backgrounder** that relate to the themes covered in that section. This way, the Backgrounder serves as an optional companion as you move through **Building Better Career Futures**.

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CAN OF WORMS

TOPIC:

Ice-Breakers/Energizers

OBJECTIVE:

- Practice creative problem-solving

OVERVIEW:

Having students think about solving issues creatively facilitates the growth of creative problem-solving skills. The issues students consider may answer some of their own concerns, as well as exemplify how to apply creative problem-solving to issues that may arise.

MATERIALS:

- A can or container
- Small strips of paper

TIME REQUIRED:

Approximately 15 minutes (the time depends on the number of issues that you or the class want to discuss and how the discussion proceeds)

SUGGESTION:

- You can use this exercise as a warm-up at the beginning of each class. Before starting the day's activities, read out two concerns from the "Can of Worms."

METHOD:

1. Have students identify one worry or issue they have about career building. For example: getting good enough marks to get into university, deciding what to do, dealing with demanding parents who turn you off of school, *etc.* Give the students examples so they know they can honestly raise their personal concerns. **Let the students know that these are all done anonymously.**

2. Hand out strips of identical paper and have each student record a concern, fold the paper, and put it in the can.

3. Have students leave their desks and sit on the floor or on chairs in a circle to create a better atmosphere for group discussion.

4. Pick one paper out of the can, read it aloud, and throw it away (so that each individual cannot see the handwriting on the paper). As a group, discuss the issue and try to come up with ways to resolve or deal with the issue. Encourage careful thought and sincere answers.

Source: *Heart Beats: Creative Career Awareness — Teacher's Guide and Activities*, Carol Durnford, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College and Youth Works Society of Alberta, 1994.

CREATIVE BRAINSTORMING

TOPIC:

Ice-Breakers/Energizers

OBJECTIVE:

- Practice creative thinking skills
- Practice brainstorming techniques

OVERVIEW:

Creativity plays a large part in career planning where being resourceful has many uses. Many of the classes in which students participate challenge the logical side of their brains. In order to plan for the future, however, students must think beyond the logical and explore areas unknown. This activity will encourage students to be creative by using brainstorming techniques.

MATERIALS:

- 5-6 different items that small groups could use in working through the brainstorming scenario "Deserted Island;" for example, rubber glove, belt, feather, comb, CD, watch
- Flipchart paper and markers

TIME REQUIRED:

15 minutes

METHOD:

1. Arrange the students into small groups (four to five students).
2. Explain the "Rules of Brainstorming" to the class.
   - Accept everyone's ideas without editing
   - Be creative rather than limiting yourself to what is real or logical
   - Observe the time limit
   - Record all ideas
3. Tell the class the following scenario.
   You have been shipwrecked on a deserted island and have been left with nothing, not even your clothes. Each group receives one item. This item is all you have with you on this island. You have to survive. Think of all the ways you could use your sole item on this island. (One plus: the island is warm and tropical!)
4. After the brief introduction, simply place an item, a marker, and a sheet of flipchart paper at each group's table.

continued...

Source: *Heart Beats: Creative Career Awareness – Teacher's Guide and Activities*, Carol Durnford, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College and Youth Works Society of Alberta, 1994.

5. Allow three to five minutes for brainstorming. At the end of the time limit, have each group present its ideas to the rest of the class.
6. Conclude by making the following points:
   - Creativity is essential to career building.
   - Career building is not a cut and dried process. Consider the example of "doctor." So many applications are involved in the medical profession that creativity is helpful in opening up numerous options (*e.g.*, gynaecologist, podiatrist, medical researcher, lab technician, paramedic). Therefore, try not to limit yourself. Creativity is an important skill to build and utilize in career building.

Source: *Heart Beats: Creative Career Awareness — Teacher's Guide and Activities*, Carol Durnford, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College and Youth Works Society of Alberta, 1994.

FOLLOW ME

TOPIC:

Ice-Breakers/Energizers

OBJECTIVE:

- Develop comfort and build rapport for open communication

OVERVIEW:

This activity gets the students active in a humorous way. It helps to create an environment of comfort. Even though the students may be rather uncomfortable at first, as they continue, confidence and comfort levels should grow. This type of activity helps ease students into feeling free to risk and contribute in group settings.

MATERIALS:

- None

TIME REQUIRED:

Approximately 5-10 minutes

METHOD:

1. Have the desks or table/chairs moved aside so that the entire class can form a circle.
2. Have the class form a circle by joining hands. Once the circle is formed, have them drop their hands and take two steps back.
3. Tell the students that everyone will take a turn taking one step into the circle and saying their name and favourite TV show. After an individual has entered the circle (as far as they want–one step can be small or take them all the way in) and said their part, the rest of the class will join that person by doing exactly what that person did. In other words, they will imitate that person; using the same body movement, facial expression, words, and intonation. Remind the class that everyone must take a turn, so keep that in mind when imitating the individual.
4. Have the whole circle move back and the next person go. This continues until you've gone around the circle and everyone has had a chance.
5. Start the process yourself, and then pass on the task to the individual on your left.

Source: *Heart Beats: Creative Career Awareness — Teacher's Guide and Activities*, Carol Durnford, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College and Youth Works Society of Alberta, 1994.

YOU'RE SO SPECIAL...

TOPIC:

Ice-Breakers (Energizers)

OBJECTIVES:

- Energize students

OVERVIEW:

This activity helps to energize students and get them ready for further creative thought. It also gives them an opportunity to think creatively about themselves and specifically their strengths. This isn't always an easy task to do, especially publicly. But, in a sense, the students are given "permission" to give themselves a "pat on the back" while starting to identify their strengths.

MATERIALS:

- A pillow (or ball or something that is easy to throw and catch)

TIME REQUIRED:

Approximately 5-10 minutes

METHOD:

1. Have the desks or table/chairs moved aside so that the entire class can form a circle.

2. Have the class form a circle by joining hands. Once the circle is formed, have them drop their hands and take two steps back.

3. Tell the students that you are going to start by throwing a pillow at someone. Whoever catches it has to quickly say something they are good at (or like to do). That person then throws it quickly to someone else, who then does the same thing. This is done very quickly and continues until everyone has had a chance to say at least one thing. People can go twice or more if the pillow comes their way.

   Note: Be prepared for students trying to "kill each other" with the pillow by throwing it a little too hard and for some answers to be rather guarded (*e.g.*, "I'm good at sex.") Addressing this in a light-hearted way before the activity starts may alleviate this.

Source: *Heart Beats: Creative Career Awareness — Teacher's Guide and Activities*, Carol Durnford, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College and Youth Works Society of Alberta, 1994.

Role of Career Development Facilitator

For some facilitators who are new to the area of career development, the role of career development facilitator may seen to be principally providing information or training in life skills. Both are critical pieces but not enough.

As the facilitator, you will be called upon to play the following 4 key roles:

- **Broker of Vital Information**: career directions or decisions must be based on the best and most accurate information available. The expectation is not, however, that the facilitator magically have perfectly accurate and current labour market information always at their fingertips. Rather, the role of broker implies teaching and coaching participants to creatively access and analyse information themselves. The role of the facilitator is to assist in widening horizons and broadening the scope of opportunities considered.

  With the advent of the "information highway", access to labour market information has increased dramatically. While this has served to provide a wider range of information, two cautions are important to keep in mind. The first caution is that more information doesn't equal better information. We face the risk of overload, losing focus and direction in an overwhelming barrage of information. The role of the facilitator must increasingly be to assist participants to sift through, priorize and critically analyze information. The second caution is that even perfect information isn't the whole career development picture. Providing information, even the most current and accurate information, is not enough. Three more critical roles exist.

- **Facilitator of Skills for Transition**: people will change careers several times. How to manage and manoeuvre requires new skills. This goes beyond life skills training to include the range of employability and self-management skills that will enable participants to move successfully through career transitions and to survive and succeed in today's labour market. The role of the facilitator is to assist in the development of skills and to assist youth to be able to recognize their own skills, to articulate them, and to build pride.

- **Facilitator of Self-Worth and Positive Self-Concept**: what we believe we can accomplish is a very good predictor of what we *will* accomplish. The facilitator's role includes helping participants begin to see themselves positively, both today and as they look towards their future.

- **Facilitator of Autonomy/Self-Management**: in today's labour market we are challenged to mange our own journey. This doesn't mean that any of us are expected to "make it alone". We are challenged to define our own purpose and direction, develop a sense of "agency" — the capacity to manage our own future — and then to access our allies in order to achieve our goals.

Group Career Development

Since **Building Better Career Futures** is a group program (ie. intended to be delivered to groups of participants) your role as a career development facilitator is married with your role as a group facilitator. This next section is for your own professional development as a group leader. Much of what is presented here may be an affirmation of what you already know and do. Regardless, it can be really helpful to step back from your group in order to understand (broadly speaking) how groups function and develop.

The model for group facilitation presented here is drawn from Amundson et al. (1989), *Employment Groups: The Counselling Connection*. If you haven't already read this text and have it as part of your collection of resources, we recommend it as an excellent, practical guide to working with groups.

The text provides a framework for looking at the group experience and outlines how and why groups evolve. Reflect on your own experience with groups, especially the group you are currently facilitating. Try to make connection between your current experience and the model presented here.

Career "counselling" has traditionally been delivered in a one-on-one model. This model is increasingly being questioned, partly because of its costs and resources, but also because of effectiveness.

Career development begins with a journey of exploration and self-understanding. It moves to skill acquisition and application. The journey and the learning acquired result largely from interacting with others in a group environment — be it peer, work or family. A great deal of our learning results from feedback we receive from others and from our impact on others — the interactive person-environment context. Employability skills tend to be interactive (ex. communication, leadership, teamwork). These can only be developed, practiced and improved in a group context.

Thus, while personal exploration and reflection are certainly important sources of learning, group enhance and enrich the career development process. The power of the group as a learning source should not be underestimated. Therefore, in this program, we have endeavoured to put together two models — career development and group development as natural partners. While the program includes reflective individual activities, experiential learning in groups is emphasized as a powerful means to empower individuals regarding their career directions. Therefore, it is important that facilitators are able to elicit maximum learning in the group setting.

There are many kinds of groups, defined by their purpose. Our suggestion is that this program belongs in the context of a "psycho-educational" group.

- Psycho-educational groups attend to both individual needs and issues (psycho) as well as to group learning outcomes (educational) in which clear goals are outlined and achieved. This differs from a therapy group which is primarily focussed on the personal needs of the individual.

By understanding how psycho-educational groups tend to function, facilitators can maximize their impact on learning:

Groups tend to go through predictable stages — these stages are learning opportunities, and group leaders need to adjust their approach to the stage of the group. A framework for facilitator skills is important for effective group management. Group skills are not simply one-on-one skills used in a group setting. They differ according to the stage of the group.

1. The Learning Chain

The first principle in group functioning is the Learning Chain, which is composed of the following elements:

- **Purpose**: well-run groups have a clear purpose. Group members know what the group is for and why they are there.

  The *theme* of this program is career development and career planning. While life-skills development and personal growth may result from the process, the clear theme, or umbrella purpose, is career development learning.

  While this may seem very obvious, there are many groups and many meetings where participants do not know why they are there or for what purpose. Just think of how many times you've sat around a table and watched the confused faces or blank stares. We often take for granted that everyone is clear about the purpose, so overlook the critical step of checking it out. Be sure to talk about the purpose of this program with participants and explore how the themes relate to them personally.

- **Goals**: participants should be clear about the group goals and how each of their individual goals fit in with the group goals.

  Again, this is not as simple as it first appears. Many groups flounder because individual goals are out of sync with group goals. For example, in a career group, if one member's goal is to be given a job and another's is to receive personal counselling, both will be disappointed unless the goals have been clarified and negotiated.

- **Activities**: group goals can be achieved in a variety of ways. As a facilitator, you want to always be balancing *task* and *maintenance* as you plan activities:

- **Tasks** refer to the actual learning activities. In **Building Better Career Futures**, there are a whole series of group activities that are geared to achieving the goals for each section.

  Maintenance refers to the conditions needed to help the group function as a group. The task is the "what", while the maintenance is the "how" — How will you structure your activities to maximize learning? What degree of structure is needed? What level of risk is appropriate? Are learners physically and emotionally supported in completing activities?

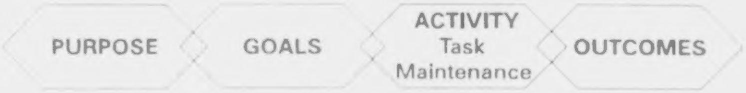
  Task and maintenance require the facilitator's attention at all phases of group development. You're always attending to both task and maintenance to seek the right balance.

  It is very easy for facilitators to overemphasize one or the other. Have you ever been in a group that is so task focused that members don't have time to blink (let alone reflect on their growth, develop a personally meaningful context, and consolidate their learning)? When this happens, the group becomes so focused on completing tasks that it no longer functions as a group. It becomes disjointed and usually loses its focus and sense of purpose.

  It is also very easy for the opposite to happen. When a group focuses exclusively on maintenance, mutual support and group process takes over and learning tasks don't get any attention. Often members feel very comfortable and supported while with the group, but they leave wondering what it was all about and unclear about what was actually achieved.

  Groups really do require a blend of targeted activities and conditions that support their achievement.

- **Outcomes**: purpose, goals and outcomes should function together, like a chain reaction. For groups to be effective, members need to understand how they will know they have accomplished the goals. The activities selected should support the goals and the outcomes.



The key outcome of this program is that each participant have a well-developed, personally meaningful and achievable career plan. All participants need to be clear that the career plan is where they are heading. Participants need to have a clear picture of what success will look like.

Groups are dynamic, changing and growing constantly. If the group works well together, new goals and the need for new activities may emerge. Often these new goals can be accommodated in the group's purpose. Other times, however, they may not fit with the group's direction and therefore need to be negotiated and/or redirected. As the facilitator, it is important to check in with the group on a regular basis regarding their norms, their sense of purpose, their goals, the clarity of their outcomes, and their comfort with activities. In this way, the learning chain becomes a tool to guide and support group process.

2. Group Stages

In the face of dynamic and fluctuating groups, it can be very reassuring to know that groups do tend to go through predictable stages in their development. They do not do so in a linear or lock-step manner, but they do generally move through certain stages. Groups move at varying speeds and according to varying pathways. Some groups might spend 20 minutes at a particular stage of group development, while others might spend two weeks at the same stage. Other groups may revisit a particular stage two or three times in their development. Therefore, much individual tailoring will need to be done, determined by the nature and composition of your group. Still, despite the uniqueness of each group, some variation on the following theme is evident in most groups:

- **Planning stage**: In the planning stage, participants are making their personal decision about whether or not to join a group and become involved in its process. Here the group members explore their own needs and the purported purpose and goals of the group to determine the extent to which their individual needs are met by what the group can offer.

  If groups are to function effectively, group members need to see enough of a match between the purpose and goals of the group/the nature of the group activities and their own desired outcomes.

- **Initial stage**: At this stage, the group meets face to face and each member assesses the extent to which they want to be there and feel comfortable with other participants. Members need to feel connected to the group. This doesn't mean that they need to feel a close personal bond with every member, but it does usually mean that there is 1 or 2 others in the group that they can imagine working with. People need to feel accepted, safe and validated, and to have a sense that they will be able to make a contribution in a way that suits them.

  At this stage, members need to know what will be expected of them and to establish that they are comfortable with how the group will be functioning. Typically, providing a high degree of structure and a low degree of risk in activities during the Initial stage helps participants to move on to the next stage in their process.

- **Transition stage**: In the transition stage, members are starting to get their feet wet. They are beginning to try out being active members. But, they tend to move in and out — almost like a dance. They feel ready to join in fully at one moment, and need to withdraw a bit and re-assess the situation in the next moment. Group members have an increasing level of trust and willingness to accept responsibility for their own learning, but it remains fragile.

  While members tend to be more open, communicate more freely and take more risks with the nature of the information they share, they are still not completely ready to jump in and work. This stage can be prolonged or very short, depending on the nature and composition of your group.

  In order to facilitate members' movement to the next stage, you are very gradually reducing the structure and very gradually increasing the risk in activities, always gauging your participants as you go.

- **Working stage**: Once a group arrives at the working stage, it's members are committed to the group goals and there are high levels of task-focused activity and productivity. There is increased willingness by the group as a whole to accept divergent opinion, as long as it advances the group goals. The group is able to deal constructively with opinions that are leading the group away from its mission and to assume increased responsibility for the tasks and maintenance. At this stage, members are interdependent, relying on each other, not just on the facilitator.

  As anyone who has facilitated a group (or been a member of a group) knows, groups don't always remain at working stage once they get there. Group may cycle through the stages a number of times. Usually, however, subsequent cycles are quicker as the group irons out its issues and develops strategies to remain at working stage. It's also important to be aware that not all individual group members move through stages at the same pace. Often when the group feels like it's breaking down, it is because some members have moved on to working while others have not.

- **Termination stage**: Group closure is a distinct stage. It is at this stage that members try to sort out what they have learned in the group and get ready to implement that learning on their own. Usually, members seek a high degree of structure and less risk (like at the initial stage). It is important to provide members with opportunities to consolidate their learning and to draw an appropriate closure to their group experience.

3. Approaches for Group Leadership

It can be helpful to consider your own facilitation style and how it affects group functionning. Just as groups go through stages of development, ideally your style should adjust to support the group at their current stage and to help them to move on to the next stage. Through this match, the facilitator's style is a catalyst to support group development.

The following are typical facilitation styles:

- **Directing**:

  The directing style is characterized by one-way communication between facilitator and group members. This style is typified by "lecturers", where the flow of information is almost exclusively from facilitator to participant. The facilitator provides a high level of structure, with clear and detailed directions for activities. The focus is on information giving (answering specific factual questions) and validation comments (positive strokes). A directing style is particularly useful at the Initial and Termination stages.

- **Influencing**:

  The influencing style is characterized by efforts to promote participant involvement with each other and less reliance on the facilitator. Communication still tends to be facilitator-directed, but the group is encouraged to assume increased ownership of the process and to communicate directly with each other. An influencing style can help a group to move from the Initial to the Transition stage

- **Facilitating**:

  In this style, the facilitator acts as a stimulus, to get things going. The facilitator continues to play an important role in guiding the overall process, but they are increasingly accepted as one member of the group and one voice in decision making and problem solving. A facilitating style should take over from directing and influencing in order to help the group to move to the Working stage.

- **Delegating**:

  This style is appropriate for groups that are well established in their working stage. The group should have a high sense of self-direction and group members should be prepared to assume responsibility for completing tasks and for keeping group process on track. In some respects, group members take on some of the facilitator's role. The facilitator steps back and allows the group to lead.

4. Facilitation Skills

There are specific skills associated with each style. The following are a sampling of skills associated with each style and stage:

- The directing style is characterized by reactive skills. At the initial stage, the facilitator is called upon to:

    - give information clearly;
    - clarify; and
    - summarize.

    These skills support member's understanding of the information presented and of agreements with respect to the purpose, goals and outcomes of the group.

- The Influencing style moves from reactive to interactive skills; such as:

    - moderating (structuring group discussions to incorporate the desired content and balanced participation);
    - blocking (setting limits with members who may be dominating the process);
    - consensus taking (establishing a process for group decision-making); and
    - linking (encouraging communication and connection directly between group members).

    These skills help group members to communicate effectively with each other.

- Finally, as you move to Facilitating and Delegating Styles, you will draw on action skills, such as:

    - modelling (demonstrating a task/process before asking members to try it);
    - process observing (stepping back as a group and reflecting on how the group has been functioning); and
    - goal setting (establishing action plans to support the achievement of outcomes).

As a facilitator, you can't possibly juggle all of these skills at once. Consider at what stage your group is functioning and target 1 or 2 skills at a time. If you ever work with a co-facilitator, you can support each other by providing feedback and coaching.

Knowing a bit about how groups function and how your style can impact doesn't (unfortunately!) mean that your group will run like clock work. It does, however, provide a problem-solving framework. When it feels like the group is breaking down, it's easy to either blame yourself or get frustrated with the members that seem to be causing the conflicts.

Knowing something about group dynamics, it's possible to use this knowledge to approach resolution a bit more systematically. You can consider:

- have norms been established collaboratively? Do they need to be revisited and updated? Are they being respected? Is everyone clear and in agreement regarding what will happen if norms are broken?

- Is the learning chain solidly in place? Do participants know why they're here? Do they care about the goals? Is everyone clear about what success will look like and are they outcomes that are personally meaningful? Is there an appropriate balance between task and maintenance? Are the activities appropriate for the group's current stage? Are there group members that are "out of sync" with the others? Is your style and the skills_____ drawing appropriate to promote group development?

In the same way as this problem-solving framework applies to the group as a whole, if there is one member who is "out of sync" you can also consider the following:

- Do they buy into the norms? Is there any work to be done here?
- Is the learning chain solid for them as an individual within the group?
- Are they at the same stage as the rest of the group?
- Can you hunch where they might be "stuck" and what need might lie behind their behaviour. At the initial stage, group members' primary need is inclusion. Typically, they seek to belong and to feel connected to the group. At the transition stage, often members' are seeking an increased level of control. If they are considering becoming actively engaged in the group process, members generally want to know that they will remain in charge of their own learning and will not be forced to do anything against their will. Finally, at working stage, members typically need trust. If they are going to be fully participating and demonstrating their abilities, they need to trust the group and its process to remain safe and to continue progressing towards outcomes.

Groups and their individual members are incredibly complex, so it's important not to over-simplify. Having said this, approaching difficulties from a needs framework can sometimes help in addressing individual concerns within the group. Rather than reacting to difficult behaviours, it is sometimes possible to step back, hunch the need behind the behaviour, and then focus on addressing the need as the root cause.

This section has provided only a glimpse of group career development. There is a wealth of information and practical strategies for working effectively in groups. We suggest *Employment Groups: The Counselling Connection* as an excellent source of support and guidance for facilitators.

Chapter 1
A New Career Development Paradigm

The woman described the times as a "violent, tormented, bewildered, suffering and disintegrating age."[1] The people face rampant, uncontrollable disease, war and insurrections, crippling taxes, frequent robbery and bad government. They complain about social change, high prices, declining morals, terrible manners of the young and the stagnant economy. They long for a simpler time, traditional values and a return to common beliefs. They criticize their leaders for living in comfort while their citizens struggle to make ends meet—sometimes just to eat. They hate the rich for making their money on the backs of the poor, mock wasteful eccentricities and envy them their comforts.

No, the woman is not Oprah nor is the disease AIDS. The comments are not from kitchen table conversations, bar talk or street interviews. The woman is historian Barbara Tuckman, writing not about our own age of upheaval, but about chaotic 14th century Europe. Yet this description rings true for us now. Many Canadians are concerned about the present and terrified of the future. Why is this happening in a country that provides an excellent quality of life, has universal health care, is experiencing economic growth, has a healthy export rate and possesses a high per capita income?[2] Because Canada is experiencing an economic paradigm shift that has dramatic social, political, educational and workplace implications. Canadians have not been prepared conceptually or emotionally to deal with these changes.

The industrial era is giving way to the information age, just as the agricultural era gave way to the industrial era. Yet many Canadians, particularly on the prairies, are still adjusting to the latter transition. Canadians are used to having a good life based on the sale of natural resources (e.g., wheat, oil, trees, minerals), and it is emotionally difficult to conceive that a natural resource-based economy will no longer sustain us. And for those who are comfortable with an industrial economy (e.g., auto manufacturing), it is painful to watch plants close as trans-national companies move their operations to places that provide less expensive labour.

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[1] Tuckman, Barbara. *A Distant Mirror*, Page xiii.

[2] Cohen, Dian. *No Small Change: Succeeding in Canada's New Economy*.

Source: *Everyday Career Development*, D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 1.

In the words of Dian Cohen:

> As a community, we have eyes only for the old economy, not the new one. For all their imperfections, we loved the good old days. We knew what made us rich (wheat, trees, energy). We knew what to expect (expansion, growth, steadily improving standards of living). We shared a common vision of our society (our values were tied to material growth and the accumulation of wealth). But appealing as that old world was, it no longer exists. And unless we recognize the present era as a transition, not a dip in the old economy, we will be left with the empty shell.
>
> Let's lay it out up front: this recession isn't going to end. It isn't going to end because this isn't a recession.[3]

Canadians must come to grips with the new economy if they are to thrive. The information age is upon us and is forcing changes in all areas of life. And in many ways, Canadians are well-equipped to thrive in this new age. What we need are new perspectives, new tools and new methods for adapting our actions, thoughts and emotions to prosper as we move from the old to the new (and this is where career development comes in). Before we look at adapting to this change, let's look at some of the features of the new economy and some of their impacts on Canada:

1. **Globalization**. Markets expand when information is only seconds away. The telecommunications advances in the past four decades have brought us to the point where a Canadian company and a Japanese company can bid with equal speed and efficiency on a potential contract in France, without leaving their respective offices. The result is that Canadians are no longer competing with their nearest neighbours; they are competing with everyone. The good news is that globalization also results in Canada's ability to export

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[3] *Ibid.* Page 4.

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp; Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 1.

anywhere in the world much more easily than in the past. And, because Canada has a solid telecommunications base, Canadians are capable of responding more quickly than many of their global competitors.

Information transmission is not the only reason for an increasingly global economy. The surprising dismantling of the Soviet Union has opened up a new market which was virtually untouchable in the past. The democratization of the eastern bloc countries has essentially increased the size of the globe in which Canada operates.

2. **Technology**. The increased ability to transfer information has resulted in the acceleration of technological developments. Scientists, engineers and technicians now have almost immediate access to information for which they used to wait weeks, months or years. This has accelerated new developments considerably. Computers allow these individuals to process information (e.g., research data) literally millions of times faster than even 20 years ago, meaning that they can develop new technologies with even greater speed.

3. **Demographics**. In Canada, the new economy is influenced by an aging population that may put enormous pressure on social services upon retirement. Currently, individuals over the age of 65 comprise 10% of the population. By 2011, they are expected to comprise 16% of the population and by 2036, 25% of the population. People are having fewer children, and the youth population will be insufficient to replace older work-leavers. For example, in 1960 each family had four children on average. In 1990, there was an average of just under two children for each adult woman in Canada.[4] Also, youth will take longer to enter the work dynamic because they will need more education than in the past. Some predict more than half of work dynamic entrants will require at least 16 years of education.

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[4] Yet another characteristic of the new economy is the changed family structure. In 1960, "family" meant husband and wife, and the vast majority of adult men and women in Canada were married. By 1990, statistical reporting had changed to reflect the growing number of non-traditional families.

Source: *Everyday Career Development*, D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 1.

The reduction of available workers will be compensated somewhat by likely changes in immigration rates, but higher levels of immigration will also have considerable impact on social services and education. Employers will have to adapt to an increasing multicultural workforce as they employ more and more immigrants. Multicultural issues will become a greater concern even without increased immigration: Canada's Native population is increasing rapidly. Some demographers expect that one-quarter of Canadian labour market entrants will be Native by the year 2000.

4. **Environment**. An almost global social trend that is having tremendous impact on the new economy is concern for the environment.[5] On the one hand, public pressure will force post-industrial countries such as Canada to spend billions of dollars to clean up and prevent environmental damage. This activity, although it creates work for people, drains the national economy. In restoring the environment, however, Canadians and others are learning methods and technologies that are highly exportable to countries who currently do not have the funds to reverse environmental damage. For example, most of the former eastern bloc countries have substantial environmental problems to address when they have sufficient capital to do so. Canadians at-the-ready will be able to export their services to these countries.

5. **Changing Workplace**. The new economy is bringing about significant changes to the workplace. Globalization is creating increased competitiveness, and increased competitiveness is forcing employers to re-engineer their operations to become more efficient and more effective. One way employers are doing this is by adopting work styles different than the traditional employer-employee relationships. Some examples of these alternate work options are:

   - contracting, where individuals work on a fee-for-service basis rather than on salary
   - part-time work, where individuals work less than a 40-hour week

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[5] We say "almost" because the concern for the environment is dominant mostly in countries that have already exploited their environments for profit and have little left to enjoy. Less wealthy countries do not always have the luxury of preserving their natural resources.

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 1.

- job sharing, where two or more individuals share the responsibilities of one job
- telecommuting, where individuals work at home and communicate by courier, fax, phone and post.

According to Statistics Canada, over 30% of Canadian work is currently non-traditional. This percentage will only increase as companies look to increase their efficiency. For example, in 1991, 23 000 part-time jobs were created in contrast to 150 000 full-time jobs that were lost, according to Statistics Canada.[6]

As well as moving to the entrepreneurial contract-services-as -needed basis, employers are making their organizations more entrepreneurial internally. Most large companies are trying to reduce their internal bureaucracies by reducing management size. To compensate for this reduction in management, employees are having to become their own managers, responsible for their own performance. This is achieved through structures such as self-managed teams, or groups of employees who monitor and correct their own performance. A significant management technique of the last decade, TQM (Total Quality Management), is partially based on the idea of having a more entrepreneurially-oriented employee (sometimes called an intrapreneur). In TQM systems, each employee is trained to see other employees as clients who need products or services. For example, the client for an assembly-line worker is the next worker on the assembly-line. Another move that is pushing employees to be self-initiated decision makers is the implementation of suggestion systems. An increasing number of companies are relying on front-line employees, not management, to determine the most efficient ways to operate. See Show Me #2 on the following page for an example.

There are numerous ways that organizations are re-structuring to become more competitive and productive. In virtually all cases, these efforts require workers/contractors who, when compared to traditional employees, are more:

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[6] Howes, Carol. *Making do with a 1/2-career.* Calgary Herald, December 12, 1992.

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 1.

- responsible for their own actions
- self-motivated
- adaptable
- service-oriented
- capable of communicating
- skilled, knowledgable (both specialized and general)
- entrepreneurial.

Show Me #2: Employee Empowerment

"It's hard to imagine that a training course in statistical process control [SPC] could have a dramatic effect on someone's life. In Wilma Porter's case, however, it put her in front of her company's executive board explaining how she took what she learned in the SPC course and applied it on the job . . . She suggested a way to salvage these [wasted] parts that saved the company $100,000 in 12 weeks.

This couldn't have happened at just any company. It had to happen at a company where employees felt free to speak up, take ownership of their work, and make the changes necessary to improve their jobs."

(Filipczak, Bob. "Ericsson General Electric: The Evolution of Empowerment," *Training*, September, 1993, Page 21.)

Later, we will examine more characteristics of the future work dynamic. For now, consider the characteristics of the new worker in terms of education. The hue and cry to get back to the basics takes on a different meaning when the basics of adapting to one's world may include entrepreneurship, service and communications as much as they include reading, writing and arithmetic. On the one hand, educators face the enormous challenge of helping youth acquire a broad set of new competencies required to survive in the new world. On the other hand, the current basics of education: thinking, reasoning, communicating, interpreting and synthesizing skills that come with studying science, mathematics, social studies and English are well-suited to meet the needs of the new economy. The trick is going to be to not throw the baby out with the bathwater.

The five areas described above do not encompass all the significant features of the new economy. However, they do encapsulate some of the key areas influencing how we live and work.

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 1.

When characterizing the new economy, Nuala Beck speaks of the four engines that make it run. Definitely of the post-industrial era, these four engines (or high-growth strategic businesses) are:

- **computers and semiconductors**. This includes, semiconductors, computer equipment and software, and the whole of information services. At present, more Americans make semiconductors than construction machinery, and more work in data processing than in petroleum refining.[7]
- **health and medical**. This includes both medical care and diagnostics, pharmaceuticals, and both surgical and medical instruments and supplies. This adds up to 13% of the United States economy.[8] And more Quebecois have jobs in health and medical care than in construction, textiles, clothing, furniture, autos, forestry and mining combined.[9]
- **communications and telecommunications**. This includes all telecommunications services, guided missiles and space equipment, radio and microwave communications and the entertainment industry. Despite its forests, British Columbia employs more people in telecommunications than in forestry.[10]
- **instrumentation**. This includes optical instruments and lenses, engineering and scientific equipment, process controls, and environmental consulting and equipment. Twice as many Americans make surgical and medical instruments as make plumbing and heating products.[11]

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[7] Beck, Page 68.

[8] Beck, Page 66.

[9] Beck, Page 69.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*

Source: *Everyday Career Development*, D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 1.

And recognizing as she does, that these engines of today will force new learning, create jobs and consume and produce wealth for a time—but only for awhile, she speculates that these engines may be replaced by the following four:

- genetic engineering and biotechnology
- artificial intelligence
- the business of space
- new materials (ceramic composites and combinations, and metal or plastic with fibres).

What will such fields mean for human-scale, everyday life? Perhaps that food grown in outer space or through genetic engineering will be able to feed the world for pennies. Human waste may be treated with bioremediation: that is, oxygen and enzymes will be developed and deposited in sewage to speed up its natural integration.

In education, the high cost of textbooks may eventually dissipate because fewer books will be used. Instead, virtual reality—a learning environment bathing students in sights, sounds, smells and sensations—will lead them through theory and into problem-solving experience. Both students and teachers will have instant access to the best minds in any subject, who will in turn help them form their own opinions and conclusions.

In artificial intelligence, computers will give users what they need to evaluate a broader, more encompassing range of outcomes. This fuzzy logic appears on the far side of the yes-no, true-false, on-off capabilities of today's software.

How does this big economic picture translate into the characteristics and availability of work day to day? In *World of Unreason*, Charles Hardy predicts a core of highly skilled workers leading organizations (being project drivers) and larger numbers of professionals—including clerical—who will be project do-ers. Because technology will streamline work, organizations will need fewer people. Entrepreneurship will explode as people try out many different ideas to make money and create their own paid work. Many people will sell portfolio work—their personal collection of ways to earn (i.e., short-term contracts,

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 1.

projects, different types of work, new—or unexplored—ways to pay for work). This will bring people to think more in terms of roles rather than jobs. The question of choice at cocktail parties then moves to "What *can* you do?" from the familiar "What do you do?"

Certainly wide-sweeping economic change is central to grasping the paradigm shift engulfing us, but it is also more than economics. Our paradigms (those implicit and fundamental interpretations governing our thinking) affect and effect social and cultural practices, patterns of government, etc. This book reflects upon ways to help students cope with the new paradigms.

Chapter 1 Summary

This chapter reviewed:

- Canada's movement from a natural resource-based economy, to an industrial economy, to an information economy
- key features of the new information economy, including globalization, technology, demographic shifts, concern for the environment and the changing workplace
- characteristics of workers in the new information economy, including abilities to be self-responsible, self-motivated, entrepreneurial and adaptable
- emerging business areas of the new economy, including computers and semiconductors, health and medical, communications and telecommunications, and instrumentation.

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 1.

Chapter 1 Exercises

1. Using what you know about your own community or region:

   (a) review significant job loss and economic downturn areas (e.g., agriculture, manufacturing) and compare these to the discussion of Canada's move to the information age (1-3 pages).

   (b) review significant job gain and economic upturn areas (1-3 pages).

   (c) is your community or region following the trend from natural resources to manufacturing to information? In what ways is it following this trend and in what ways is it not (1-3 pages)?

2. Give one example from your own community or region of an impact of each of the key features of the new economy: globalization, technology, demographics, environment and changing workplace (1-3 pages).

3. Review the curriculum that you teach and briefly describe how it helps students meet the workforce requirements of the new economy. Also, describe some of its shortcomings in this regard (1-3 pages).

4. Review the engines of the information age. Identify some of the key ways that they currently have an impact on your community (1-3 pages).

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 1.

Chapter 2
What *Is* Career Development Today?

The discussion in the previous chapter illustrates the need to look at career development differently than in the past. In this chapter, we try to provide a context in which to view career development and a general process for helping others with their career-building activities.[1]

There are five key messages in today's career development:[2]

1. Change is constant
2. Follow your heart
3. Focus on the journey
4. Stay learning
5. Be an ally.

These five ideas capture the essence of career development.

Change is Constant

As discussed in the previous chapter, rapid and continuous technological, economic and social changes directly influence the world of work. As a result, the labour market of the past is quickly becoming a work dynamic which is difficult to capture in occupational dictionaries, codes or titles. For example, dozens of environmental roles thrive today that did not even exist at the turn of the decade. See **Show Me #3**. Entirely new work roles are emerging, and old work roles require new knowledge, skills and attitudes.

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[1] For a solid survey of career development theories, see Brown, D. and L. Brooks (Eds.). *Career Choice and Development, Applying Contemporary Theories to Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1984. For a brief survey of career development theories, see: Redekopp, D. E. *Theories of Career Development*, Edmonton, Alberta: Centre for Career Development Innovation, 1990.

[2] Parts of the following discussion are taken directly from: Redekopp, D.E. New messages in career development. Paper submitted to *Alberta Counsellor*, 1993.

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

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Personal change occurs continuously as well. People grow and develop new knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, networks and other assets at varying rates. Assessment tools (e.g., aptitude tests, personality tests, interest tests), the backbone of traditional career development, give people the impression that change is unlikely; that who they are, is who they will be. People need to recognize, value and nurture their own fluidity if they are to adapt adequately to their changing environments.

Show Me #3: Emerging Occupations

The Centre for Career Development Innovation conducted a study of roles in the environment sector in 1990. Interviews with human resource people in various organizations revealed that occupations were being created at a rapid rate simply to keep up with demands in the area. In fact, after the so-called "final report" was finished, new occupations were found at the rate of two to four a week for the subsequent year.

One of the most dominant issues regarding high school students among educators, parents and the students themselves is choosing an occupation. Parents and high school students view the selection of an occupational goal as one of the top three issues faced in high school.[3] If they could see that change is constant, both students and parents would feel far less pressure to make this choice. When change is constant, the occupation that was chosen in Grade 11 may not exist by the time the student has trained for it! Or the occupation may be so different by the time the student has trained for it that it is no longer desirable. Or new roles will have been created that we cannot yet predict. In any case, the message that change is constant needs to be translated for students into "don't get too specific about your long-term goals." Students who doggedly pursue long-term goals may find themselves extremely disappointed as they approach those goals. See **Show Me #4**. We certainly need to help students carve out general directions for their lives, but we have to be careful about asking What are you going to be when you grow up? Possibly we can replace that ubiquitous question with "What sorts of things do you want to do now and later?"

Another implication of the change is constant theme is a move away from the strong values we hold regarding stability and predictability. Our entire cultural notions of work imply that it is good to be clear about what you want to be and that it is equally good to stick with whatever that is for a long period of time (even though working Canadians change occupations an average of four to six times; a number that is likely to increase rapidly). Students need to hear the message that security comes from being able to adapt to change, not from doing the same thing for a long time.

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[3] Posterski, D. and R. Bibby. *Canada's Youth "Ready for Today."* Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Youth Foundation, 1989.

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

Show Me #4: Moving Targets

Consider Kim, a young Grade 11 student who has decided to become an automotive technician because she loves working on cars. By the time Kim finishes school, takes training and completes her apprenticeship, the role of automotive technician may be very different than it is today. The automotive industry is tending to fragment the role into specialty areas (e.g., exhaust specialist, fuel injection specialist, brake specialist) and has little overlap between areas. If Kim wants to be a generalist, it will be more difficult then than it is now. This does not mean that Kim should be discouraged, however. It does mean that Kim should broaden her horizons somewhat so that she is ready to accommodate to changes in the industry.

Yet another implication of believing that change is constant is its influence on helping students make work-related decisions. The most common process for helping students make decisions about the types of work they should do was developed in the early 1900s by Frank Parsons. In essence, Parsons recommended that people (a) know themselves, (b) know the world of work and (c) use true reasoning to make the best match between the two. This approach marks the origin of the field of career development, and most practitioners still follow this trait-and-factor (also called person-environment) model. On the surface, this method makes a great deal of sense. When we look at how it is implemented, however, its usefulness becomes somewhat questionable.

Parsons' efforts were followed by people who spent a great deal of time and effort examining and creating ways that people could know themselves. One way that gained a great deal of popularity was the use of the psychometric assessment instrument. In the latter half of the previous century and the first half of this century, science reigned supreme. Physics, chemistry and biology seemed to have the capacity to measure and predict virtually all non-human events. When psychologists started to apply the methods of the natural sciences to human behaviour, it seemed only natural to expect that human behaviour could also be measured and predicted. Hence, objective assessment instruments seemed to be the perfect tools to measure people so that they could better know

Source: *Everyday Career Development*, D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

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themselves. In a flurry of activity that continues to this day, psychologists and career development specialists began to develop tests that would measure all aspects of the person: intelligence, interests, aptitudes, values and skills, to name a few. Just before World War II, this type of work received a major boost because military administrations needed to make rapid decisions about great numbers of recruits. Tests seemed like the most cost-effective, time-effective and objective way to evaluate recruits.

On the other side of the equation was the dictum to know the world of work. It turns out that tests could help with this, too. For example, consider John Holland's approach to career development. Holland, whose approach to career development is the most popular in the world today, proposed that human personalities are comprised of six main types:

- realistic (likes concrete results, working with tangibles)
- investigative (curious, likes working with ideas)
- artistic (creative, likes aesthetics)
- social (likes working with people)
- enterprising (likes leading people)
- conventional (likes organizing information).

Assessment instruments (e.g., Self-directed Search) were devised to measure individuals according to these types. To make the match to the world of work, these same assessment tools could be given to people already working in an occupation and the results would show what types of personalities preferred specific types of work. For example, the personality type of most career counsellors is S-A-E (Social-Artistic-Enterprising, respectively). A person who is S-A-E is likely to find the occupation of career counselling interesting, according to Holland's theory.

This example illustrates how assessment instruments could help with both the tasks of know yourself and know the world of work. Now, back to the theme change is constant. The trait-and-factor method depends almost entirely on a different theme—change is rare! Assessment instruments can measure only a point in time both on the know yourself and know the world of work side of the

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

trait-and-factor equation. If nothing changes, the method works just fine. If change is constant, however, the match between the person and work may be incorrect the moment after the match is made. Consider the example in **Show Me #5** on the following page.

To put the problem another way, virtually all the information we have about the work dynamic (e.g. occupational information) is suspect because of constant change. Researchers simply cannot keep up with updating the measurement of occupational traits.[4] Traditional assessment instruments, which rely on this information to adequately make a match are also are suspect. Those not intimately familiar with the field of career development may be unable to appreciate what an enormous blow this is to the field. Tests have been the backbone of career counselling for decades, and in the new economy of constant change, their usefulness is quite limited.

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[4] Occupations are changing so rapidly, in fact, that the term "occupation" may be abandoned in the coming years.

Source: *Everyday Career Development*, D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

Show Me #5:
Testing and Change

When Randy was 16 years old he completed the Self-directed Search and found himself to be a Realistic-Investigative-Social personality. After exploring several occupations that fit the R-I-S mold, Randy decided to become a vending technician. He loved working with his hands, playing with mechanical devices and electrical motors and seeing how things work.

A couple of years later, Randy finished his schooling and landed a job as a vending technician. Much to his surprise, vending technicians did much less mechanical and electrical work than they had two years previously. The industry had changed to the point where most vending operations were computer-controlled and modularized. In fact, most vending machines had computers that diagnosed their own problems! Little was left for the technician to do but replace the module that the computer found faulty.

Luckily, Randy had changed too. Thanks to a science teacher who took Randy on as a protegé, Randy had become quite interested in physics, a subject in which he previously had done poorly. He always thought he did not like science, but once it made sense to him he really enjoyed it. After his disappointment with vending, Randy pursued an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering.

In the new economy, tests can, when used with caution, still help people understand themselves, their skills and their motives.[5] They provide a different perspective from which to view oneself. They can also, however, *prevent* people from developing self-awareness and trusting their own instincts about who they are.

Other implications of this message for career development will be reviewed in conjunction with the remaining four messages.

Follow Your Heart

If change is constant, we need to pay attention to those things that have relative stability. The heart (the set of characteristics that include values, entrenched beliefs and interests) is reasonably stable and should be heeded. The heart

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[5] Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development has self-assessment materials that you may want to review. Call 422-1794 for more information.

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

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drives one's career path. Skills and knowledge are simply tools that allow a person to follow the path.

A corollary to this message is that dreaming is normal, natural and appropriate. We too often concern ourselves with helping young people become realistic at the expense of following their dreams. Many people have unrealistic dreams, but there is nothing wrong with pursuing them and cherishing them. Reality will impose itself on people of its own accord. We need not accelerate this process. What we need to do is provide people with tools and strategies required to move toward their dreams. People may not live out their visions, but they should be able to strive for them and perhaps live out portions of their dreams.

A key implication of this message from a career development perspective is that we must help students identify their values, beliefs and interests and—more importantly—we must help students develop ways to continually re-assess their values, beliefs and interests. Although the heart is reasonably stable, it does change. We need to help young people keep their eyes open for opportunities in the world (the world of work or otherwise) that will allow them to fulfill their values, beliefs and interests. The world is constantly changing and if youth can continually scan these changes for new opportunities, they will be better able to fulfill their dreams. See Show Me #6 for an example.

Show Me #6: Components of the Heart

George had his heart set on being an NHL hockey player. Unfortunately, George had bad knees and it was virtually impossible for him to ever reach his goal. George visited a career counsellor who asked him why this goal was so important and interesting to him. After a couple of hours, they had identified George's values, beliefs and interests. Then, George was sent to explore work roles that seemed to fulfill similar values, beliefs and interests. George discovered that sports physiotherapy, although not quite as fulfilling as playing in the NHL, seemed to be an area that was close to his heart.

Focus on the Journey

One of the reasons that the field of career development has been preoccupied with helping individuals select appropriate occupational destinations is the desire to help people find meaningful and fulfilling work. In doing so, however, we have underemphasized the meaningfulness of the journey toward one's vision. Since continual change is rendering redundant the practice of predicting

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

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occupational destinations, we must take great efforts to help people better fulfill their values, beliefs and interests with *every* decision they make. As stated previously, we should help people move away from feeling a need to correctly make **the decision** (What should I be?) and move toward examining the immediate and enduring effects of virtually **all decisions**.

What this means is that all decisions your students make are, in one way or another, potential career decisions. What courses to take, what intramurals to choose, what extra-curricular activities to undertake and what clothes to buy are all possible examples of career decisions. So when you help a student make a decision, it is likely you are helping a student make a career decision. You will probably help more students make more decisions than a career counsellor will and, therefore, you might have greater influence on career decision making than a career counsellor! Frightened? You need not be, because this message removes the need to make the *BIG* decision and therefore the fear of making the *GRAVE* error. Each decision simply brings one closer to a vision or further away from a vision.

Stay Learning

We all know about lifelong learning and its importance. The beliefs, however, that the public holds about career development imply that nothing more needs to be done once an occupational destination is reached. We will be better able to communicate the prescription to stay learning when the previous three messages have been adopted. Learning is constant when change is constant.

Unfortunately, many people cringe when they hear about lifelong learning. People who have had limited success with formal learning and who are anxious about lifelong learning need to know that most learning does not occur in formal settings. We need to help people learn in effective and enjoyable ways within informal and non-formal learning events.

People also need ways to keep track of their learning experiences. Individuals are continually accumulating assets (e.g., skills, contacts) through learning events, but few people have a mechanism by which they can identify, record and organize these assets. Consequently, they often do not recognize that they have undergone a tremendous amount of learning.

Source: *Everyday Career Development*, D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

As an educator, the message to stay learning will be familiar. The tricky part is helping students adopt and live out this message. So often we have miscommunicated the message "stay learning even after you are out of school" as "go to university." There is no doubt that universities are wonderful places to learn, but in giving this message we have inadvertently given the message that if you go to work immediately after school, you can stop learning. We need to find new ways to communicate the stay learning message so that all students leaving school are their own personal learning machines, regardless of whether they are learning through their hearts, hands, heads or souls. See **Convince Me #2**.

Be an Ally

This last theme brings us back to the old idea of the importance of community. Many people do not feel part of a community and do not have the wherewithal to create one for themselves. Many youth, in particular, see the work dynamic as something external and distant. They do not realize that the work dynamic surrounds them, as represented by their neighbours, friends' parents and parents' friends. These allies surround youth, yet they appear to have little ability to connect with each other. See **Show Me #7**.

Our society has stressed independence and autonomy; perhaps we need to re-examine interdependence and community. It is not a sign of weakness to ask for help. Rather, it is a sign of strength to identify a need, clearly express the need and articulate how others can help meet the need. This is particularly true when a person needs to learn continually, keep up with change and adapt to change.

Convince Me #2:
Schools and the Trades

Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development recently completed a study on tradespeople who apprenticed 15, 10 and five years prior to 1992. Findings in this study illustrate a traditional lack of support for the trades in high schools. For example, almost none of the hundreds interviewed in this study reported that they were encouraged to enter the trades by their high school teachers or counsellors. In fact, the vast majority of those who reported that the school influenced their decision (which, by the way, was a very small number) suggested that counsellors and teachers tried to persuade them *not* to enter the trades. This is an interesting bias, especially when considering that more than 80% of the interviewed tradespeople were very satisfied with their choice.

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Source: *Everyday Career Development*, D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

Again, the challenge educators face is providing young people with the tools and strategies they need to live out this message. These include networking strategies, communication skills, needs analysis strategies and, perhaps most importantly, attitudes of initiative and confidence.

These are not radical messages. They simply provide a broader perspective from which to view career development. They also provide a more exciting view of career development than do traditional beliefs about the field. In the next chapter these messages are converted into practical processes that you can use to help your students.

Show Me #7: Networking and the Work Dynamic

Just for fun (and to prove the point about connectedness to the work dynamic), think of an exceedingly obscure occupation (e.g., belly dancer, balloonist). Then, ask the students in your next class if they know a person in that occupation or if they know someone who almost certainly knows a person in the occupation. Then, have one of the students attempt to contact a person in the occupation. Our guess is that the student will be speaking to that person in three phone calls or less.

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 Summary

This chapter reviewed five key messages of today's career development:

- ***Change is constant***. The work dynamic is changing so rapidly that selecting enduring occupational destinations in high school is no longer viable
- ***Follow your heart***. The heart is comprised of values, beliefs and interests, and it is more stable than the work dynamic
- ***Focus on the journey***. Almost all decisions are career decisions. The journey must be as meaningful as the destination
- ***Stay learning***. When change is constant, learning must be constant
- ***Be an ally***. The community connects the young person to the work dynamic.

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 Exercises

1. Identify five ways you have changed in the last five years. Identify five ways your role as an educator has changed in the last five years. Predict five ways you and your role will change in the next five years.

2. Identify your values, beliefs and interests. Identify how you fulfill these in your work and non-work lives.

3. Review where you are today in relationship to where you were in high school. Trace the decisions you made to get from there to here. How many were big decisions and how many were (or seemed at the time to be) little decisions?

4. Identify some of the key things you have learned in the last five years. What were the sources of those learnings (e.g., formal instruction, experience)? Identify five key areas in which you would like to learn in the next year.

5. Complete the activity described in **Show Me #7** with a couple of occupations and several classes. Record the results.

Source: *Everyday Career Development,* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994, Chapter 2.

Lecturette: The High Five Messages[1]

Change is Constant

Dynamic Labour Market

Rapid and continuous technological, economic, and social changes directly influence the world of work. As a result, the "labour market" of the past is quickly becoming a "work dynamic" that is difficult to capture in occupational dictionaries, codes, or titles. For example, dozens of environmental roles thrive today that did not even exist at the turn of the decade. Entirely new work roles are emerging, and old work roles are changing to require new skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

Personal Change

Personal change occurs continuously as well. People grow and develop new skills, attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, networks, and other assets at varying rates. Assessment tools (*e.g.*, aptitude tests, personality tests, interest tests), the backbone of traditional career development, give people the impression that change is unlikely; that who they are is who they will be. People need to recognize, value, and nurture their own fluidity if they are to adapt adequately to their changing environments.

"So," you are saying to yourself, "tell me something new. It's obvious that change is constant. What impact does this have on career development practices?" We're glad you asked, because the impact on how we help people (especially young people) with career development issues is significant.

Pressure to Choose

First, let's look at one of the most dominant issues regarding high school students among educators, parents, and the students themselves: choosing an occupation (which most people would refer to as "choosing a career"). Parents and high school students view the selection of an occupational goal as one of the top three issues faced in high school.[2] If they could see that change is constant, both students and parents would feel far less pressure to have students make this choice.

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[1] Redekopp, D., Fiske, L., Lemon, F., Garber-Conrad, B. (1994). *Everyday Career Development*. Alberta Education. This lecturette is used with permission from the authors.

Source: *Engage*, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide.

Occupational Change

When change is constant, the occupation that was chosen in Grade 11 *may not exist by the time the student has trained for it!* Or, the occupation may be so different by the time the student has trained for it that it is no longer desirable. Or, new roles will have been created that we cannot yet predict. In any case, the message that "change is constant" needs to be translated for students into "don't get too specific about your long-term goals." Students who doggedly pursue long-term goals may find themselves extremely disappointed as they approach those goals. We certainly need to help students carve out general directions for their lives, but we have to be careful about asking "What are you going to be when you grow up?" Possibly we can replace that ubiquitous question with "What sorts of things do you want to do now and later?"

Adaptability

Another implication of the "change is constant" theme is a move away from the strong values we hold regarding stability and predictability. Look at one of the most common[3] work-related phrases used by high school students: "I don't want to do X for the rest of my life." Who is telling these students that they have to do *anything* for the rest of their lives? We are not, and you are not, yet the students are getting this message. Our entire cultural notions of work imply that it is "good" to be clear about what you want to be and that it is equally "good" to stick with whatever that is for a long period of time (even though working Canadians change occupations an average of four to six times, a number that is likely to increase rapidly). Students need to hear the message that security comes from being able to adapt to change, not from doing the same thing for a long time.

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[2] Bibby, R. & Posterski, D. (1992). *Teen trends: A nation in motion.* Stoddart: Canada.

[3] To be truthful, we do not know if this is one of the most common phrases; we have not actually counted work-related phrases uttered by high school students and tallied the most common. It is a common phrase, though.

Source: *Engage,* Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide.

(Stop here for delivery to parents. If you feel comfortable with the material in the following section on assessment, deliver this to the ENGAGE trainers/trainers of trainers.)

Assessment

Yet another implication of believing that change is constant is its influence on helping students make work-related decisions. The most common process for helping students (and adults) make decisions about the types of work they should do was developed in the early 1900s by Frank Parsons. In essence, Parsons recommended that people (a) know themselves, (b) know the world of work and (c) use "true reasoning" to make the best match between the two. This approach marks the origin of the field of career development, and most practitioners still follow this "trait-and-factor" (also called "person-environment") model. On the surface, this method makes a great deal of sense. When we look at how it is implemented, however, its usefulness becomes somewhat questionable.

Parsons' efforts were followed by people who spent a great deal of time and effort examining and creating ways that people could "know themselves." One way that gained a great deal of popularity was the use of the psychometric assessment instrument. In the latter half of the previous century and the first half of this century, science reigned supreme. Physics, chemistry, and biology seemed to have the capacity to measure and predict virtually all non-human events. When psychologists started to apply the methods of the natural sciences to human behaviour, it seemed only natural to expect that human behaviour could also be measured and predicted. Hence, "objective" assessment instruments seemed to be the perfect tools to measure people so that they could better know themselves. In a flurry of activity that continues to this day, psychologists and career development specialists began to develop tests that would measure all aspects of the person: intelligence, interests, aptitudes, values, and skills, to name but a few. Just before World War II, this type of work received a major boost because military administrations needed to make rapid decisions about great numbers of recruits. Tests seemed like the most cost-effective, time-effective, and objective way to evaluate recruits.

Source: *Engage,* Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide.

On the other side of the equation was the dictum to "know the world of work." It turns out that tests could help with this, too. For example, consider John Holland's approach to career development. Holland, whose approach to career development is the most popular in the world today, proposed that human personalities are comprised of six main types:

- Realistic (likes concrete results, working with tangibles),
- Investigative (curious, likes working with ideas),
- Artistic (creative, likes aesthetics),
- Social (likes working with people),
- Enterprising (likes leading people), and
- Conventional (likes organizing information).

Assessment instruments (*e.g.*, *Self-Directed Search*) were devised to measure individuals according to these types. To make the match to the world of work, these same assessment tools could be given to people already working in an occupation and the results would show what types of personalities preferred specific types of work. For example, the personality type of most career counsellors is S-A-E (Social-Artistic-Enterprising, respectively). A person who is S-A-E is likely to find the occupation of career counselling interesting, according to Holland's theory.

This example illustrates how assessment instruments could help with both the tasks of "know yourself" and "know the world of work." Parsons still makes sense, right? Now, back to the theme "change is constant." The "trait-and-factor" method depends almost entirely on a different theme — "change is rare!" Assessment instruments can measure only a point in time both on the "know yourself" and "know the world of work" side of the trait-and-factor equation. If nothing changes, the method works just fine. If change is constant, however, the match between the person and work may be incorrect the moment after the match is made.

Source: *Engage*, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide.

To put the problem another way, virtually all the information we have about the work dynamic (*e.g.*, occupational information) is suspect because of constant change. Researchers simply cannot keep up with updating the measurement of occupational traits[4]. Traditional assessment instruments, which rely on this information to adequately make a match, therefore, are also suspect. Those of you who are not intimately familiar with the field of career development may not be able to appreciate what an enormous blow this is to the field. Tests have been the backbone of career counselling for decades, and in the new economy of constant change, their usefulness is quite limited.

Before abandoning tests entirely, however, consider this: In the new economy, tests can, when used with caution, still help people understand themselves, their skills, and their motives. They provide a different perspective from which to view oneself. They also can, however, *prevent* people from developing self-awareness and trusting their own instincts about who they are.

Other implications of this message for career development will be reviewed in conjunction with the remaining four messages.

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[4] Occupations are changing so rapidly, in fact, that the term "occupation" may be abandoned in the coming years.

Source: *Engage,* **Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide.**

Learning is Ongoing

Stay Learning

We all know about "lifelong learning" and its importance. However, the beliefs that the public holds about career development imply that nothing more needs to be done once an occupational destination is reached. We will be better able to communicate the prescription to stay learning when the above messages have been adopted. Learning is constant when change is constant.

Informal/Non-formal Learning

Unfortunately, many people cringe in terror when they hear about "lifelong learning." People who have had limited success with formal learning and who are therefore anxious about "lifelong learning" need to know that most learning does not occur in formal settings. We need to help people learn in effective and enjoyable ways within informal and non-formal learning events.

Track Assets

People also need ways to keep track of their learning experiences. Individuals are continually accumulating assets (*e.g.*, skills, contacts) through learning events, but few people have a mechanism by which they can identify, record, and organize these assets. Consequently, they often do not recognize that they have undergone a tremendous amount of learning.

As an educator or facilitator, the message to stay learning will not be new to you. The tricky part is going to be helping students to adopt and *live out* this message. So often we have miscommunicated the message "stay learning even after you are out of school" as "go to university." There is no doubt that universities are wonderful places to learn, but in giving this message we have been inadvertently giving the message "if you go to work immediately after school, you can stop learning." We need to find new ways to communicate the "stay learning" message so that all students leaving school are their own "personal learning machines," regardless of whether they are learning through their hearts, hands, heads, or souls.

Source: *Engage*, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide.

Follow your Heart

Values, Beliefs, Interests

If change is constant, we need to pay attention to those things that have relative stability. The "heart" (the set of characteristics that include values, entrenched beliefs, and interests) is reasonably stable (but still subject to change!) and should be heeded. One's "heart" drives one's career path. Skills and knowledge are simply tools that allow the path to be followed.

Dream, Vision

A corollary to this message is that dreaming is normal, natural, and appropriate. We too often concern ourselves with helping young people become "realistic" at the expense of following their dreams. Yes, many people have "unrealistic" dreams, but there is nothing wrong with pursuing them and cherishing them. Reality will impose itself on people of its own accord; we do not need to accelerate this process. What we need to do is provide people with tools and strategies required to move towards their dreams. People may not live out their visions, but they should be able to strive for them and perhaps live out portions of their dreams.

Re-assess

A key implication of this message from a career development perspective is that we must help students identify their values, beliefs, and interests and, more importantly, we must help students develop ways to continually re-assess their values, beliefs, and interests. Although the "heart" is reasonably stable, it does change. Then, we need to help young people keep their eyes open for opportunities in the world (the world of work or otherwise) that will allow them to fulfil their values, beliefs, and interests. The world is constantly changing and if youth can continually scan these changes for new opportunities, they will be better able to fulfil their dreams.

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Source: *Engage,* Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide.

Focus on the Journey

Current Fulfilment

One of the reasons that the field of career development has been preoccupied with helping individuals select appropriate occupational destinations is that we wish to help people find meaningful and fulfilling work. In doing so, however, we have underemphasized the meaningfulness of the journey towards one's vision. Now, since continual change is rendering redundant the practice of predicting occupational destinations, we must take great efforts to help people better fulfil their values, beliefs, and interests with *every* decision they make. As stated previously, we should help people move away from feeling a need to correctly make "the" decision ("What should I be?") and move toward examining the immediate and enduring effects of virtually all decisions.

Every Decision is a Career Decision

What it means is that all decisions your students make are, in one way or another, potential career decisions. What courses to take, what intramurals to choose, what extra-curricular activities to undertake and what clothes to buy are all possible examples of career decisions. So when you help a student make a decision, it is likely you are helping a student make a career decision. Frightened? You need not be, because this message removes the need to make the *BIG* decision and therefore the fear of making the *GRAVE* error. Each decision simply gets one closer to a vision or further away from a vision.

Source: *Engage*, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide.

Access Your Allies

Community

This last theme brings us back to the very old idea of the importance of community. Many people do not feel part of a community and do not have the wherewithal to create one for themselves. Many youth, in particular, see the work dynamic as something external, "out there," and distant. They do not realize that the work dynamic surrounds them, as represented by their neighbours, friends' parents and parents' friends. These allies surround youth, yet they appear to have little ability to connect with each other.

Ask for What You Need

Our society has stressed independence and autonomy; perhaps we need to re-examine interdependence and community. It is not a sign of weakness to ask for help. Rather, it is a sign of strength when one can identify a need, clearly express the need and articulate how others can help one meet the need. This is particularly true when one needs to learn continually, keep up with change, and adapt to change.

Strategies

Again, the challenge educators face is providing young people with the tools and strategies they need to live out this message. These include networking strategies, communication skills, needs analysis strategies and, perhaps most importantly, attitudes of initiative and confidence.

As you can see, these are not radical messages. They simply provide a broader perspective from which to view career development. They also provide a much more exciting view of career development than do traditional beliefs about the field.

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Source: *Engage,* Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide.

Summary

Five key messages of today's career development are:

- *Change is constant:* The work dynamic is changing so rapidly that selecting occupational destinations in high school is no longer viable.
- *Learning is ongoing:* When change is constant, learning needs to be constant.
- *Follow your heart:* The "heart" is comprised of values, beliefs, and interests, and it is more stable than the work dynamic.
- *Focus on the journey:* Almost all decisions are career decisions, the journey needs to be as meaningful as the destination.
- *Access your allies:* The community connects the young person to the work dynamic.

Source: *Engage,* Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide.

I Wanna Know

TIME	10 - 15 minutes
PURPOSE	To energize the group To review participants' names
MATERIALS	One less chair than the number of players
PROCESS	Have the players place their chairs in a circle, except for one player who stands in the centre. The player in the centre says, "My name is ______, and I would like to meet anyone who______(for example, likes pizza)." All those people that meet the criteria of the descriptor (in this case, those who like pizza) must quickly exchange seats with each other. The person left standing becomes the player in the centre. Descriptors can be varied and fun, for example, everyone who is wearing blue jeans, who brushed their teeth this morning, who has blue eyes, who loves school. End the activity once the momentum begins to wane.
TIPS	Have fun, be agile, and don't let the activity carry on too long!
NOTES	

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Source: *Engage,* Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide, Alternative Exercises for High 5 Messages.

Accessing Allies

TIME	30 - 45 minutes
PURPOSE	To introduce the participants to the importance of accessing allies and support systems
MATERIALS	Flip chart paper Felt marker Anagrams and their solutions
PREPARATION	Read Allies and Access in *Your Life* magazine, p. 18
PROCESS	Throughout the workshop the participants will have discussed a variety of issues. These issues may range from study concerns, to job search, to housing concerns, to domestic violence. In order to empower the youth to take control of their life and learning, it is important for them to be familiar with support persons and community resources. Distribute either an anagram or its solution to each participant. Instruct the participants to find "their other half," that is, each participant with the anagram should end up finding the person with the solution. Discuss with the participants the various ways that they solved the anagram puzzle. It is likely that some participants tried to "figure it out on their own," that others used the help of their friends, and that still others surveyed the group members that held the solutions. Make the following transition: Similar to the game, participants are often faced with a problem or life situation. They will be able to work out some of the life situations on their own. For others' situations, however, it is important to access help of their allies.

Source: *Engage,* Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide, Alternative Exercises for High 5 Messages.

On flip chart paper, draw a target with three or four rings around the bull's-eye. Ask the participants who they would first turn to for help with some of the issues that they face in their lives. Write these in the centre ring. Discuss the characteristics of these people. Reinforce the notion of allies being people they can trust within a situation.

Working your way outward from the centre, ask who else the participants might be able to access support from. Use some of the participants' issues to concretely define the types of allies/community resources that participants can seek out. Compile a list of community resources and services. These may include:

- knowledge of alternative schools, learning programs (cooperative education, correspondence, apprenticeship, *etc.*)
- youth emergency shelters
- employment centres/employability programs
- distress/crisis lines
- alcohol and drug abuse programs, treatment facilities
- knowledge of student finances
- knowledge of legal aid

It is important to discuss with the youth ways to access these resources. If there is a resource the participants are particularly interested in pursuing, you may wish to arrange for a guest speaker to talk with the participants or arrange for a field trip.

TIPS

Once participants are paired up, you can introduce other activities such as blind walks, trust falls, *etc.*, which can lead into a discussion of the importance of trust in the participant/ally relationship.

When possible, visit the community resources in person. Being in an informed position makes you better able to make appropriate suggestions to the youth participants.

Have phone numbers available for resources most likely to be requested.

Judge your time and the energy level of the group. It may not be necessary to begin this activity by using the anagram puzzle.

Source: *Engage,* **Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide, Alternative Exercises for High 5 Messages.**

ENGAGE Workshop Leader's Guide

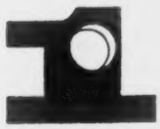
Anagrams

Photocopy the anagrams onto a piece of heavy weight paper or poster board. Cut into individual cards.

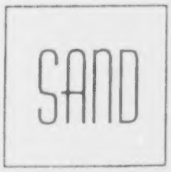
Source: *Engage,* Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide, Alternative Exercises for High 5 Messages.

STAND ——— i	I understand
GROUND ——— ft ft ft ft ft ft	6 feet underground
0 ——— PhD BEd BSc	3 degrees below zero
G E S G	scrambled eggs
ecnalG	backwards glance
BAKED	half Baked

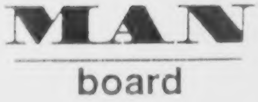
Source: *Engage,* Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide, Alternative Exercises for High 5 Messages.



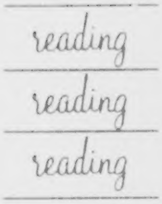
hole in one



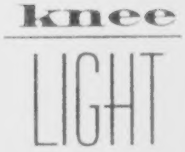
sand box



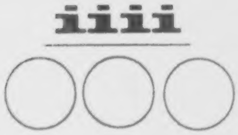
man overboard


reading
reading
reading

reading between the lines



neon light



circles under the eyes

Source: *Engage,* Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide, Alternative Exercises for High 5 Messages.

MIND matter	mind over matter
LE VEL	split level
STAND i	I understand
GROUND ft ft ft ft ft ft	6 feet underground

Source: *Engage*, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide, Alternative Exercises for High 5 Messages.

Personalizing The High Five

TIME

30 - 45 minutes

PURPOSE

To reinforce the "High Five" messages
For the participants to relate the High Five messages to their personal issues
For the participants to determine concrete strategies for dealing with their issues

MATERIALS

Paper
Pencil
3" X 5" file card
5 slips of paper with one High Five message written on each piece of paper (see Appendix)
High Five card

PROCESS

The way you implement this activity will depend on the nature of the group, your preference of delivery style, and the time frame you are working within. Three steps to the activity are offered. Pick and choose from these or do all three.

Delivery Strategy #1

In this part of the activity, participants brainstorm ways to implement the High Five messages. As a large group, have participants brainstorm ways to realize the message "Focus on the Journey." (We suggest doing this message as a large group because it is the most difficult one to contextualize.) Participants may say: We could learn more about ourselves to determine our interests, values and beliefs; we could think about how new habits now will help me in the future; we can look at our options now to see if there's better ways to do things, *etc.*

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Source: *Engage,* Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide, Alternative Exercises for High 5 Messages.

Break the participants into two groups. Assign two High Five messages to each group. Have the participants brainstorm actions they can take to implement the High Five messages. Have each group present their ideas to the larger group.

Delivery Strategy #2

Distribute a High Five card and a file card to each participant. Have participants select one issue or life situation to work on during the next week and write this at the top of the card. Then have the youth write the High Five messages as headings, and underneath each heading write an action they can carry out in the next few days. For example, a participant's card could say:

- *Issue:* Finances
- *Change is Constant:* bring my lunch instead of buying it
- *Learning is Ongoing:* find out about student loans
- *Focus on the Journey:* reward myself for finances well spent by eating out on Friday
- *Follow Your Heart:* stand up for what I believe in—say no when my friends want me to spend too much money on entertainment
- *Access Your Allies:* talk with the counsellor to find out if I'm eligible for a student loan

Arrange to have somone, such as the organizational representative attending the workshop (*e.g.*, school counsellor), check with the participants in a few days to see if they were able to carry through on their actions.

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Source: *Engage*, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide, Alternative Exercises for High 5 Messages.

Delivery Strategy #3

Divide participants into small groups. Supply flip chart paper and a felt marker. Have the members select a person to record information. Each participant selects one issue or concern (*e.g.*, school is boring) which is recorded on the flip chart paper. Participants then work together to brainstorm possible solutions or actions that can be taken to address the presenting issues. For school is boring participants may say: We could smoke in school, listen to walkmans, ask more questions, find out what the point of the lesson is, bring in guest speakers, *etc.* Participants discuss and list the consequences of each suggestion. They also assess the "worthwhileness" of the suggestions by determining how the suggestions "feel" and which ones would be "workable." Each participant then makes a personalized plan on a file card.

TIPS

Anticipate potential points for consideration so that you can offer suggestions if group members have difficulty getting started. For examples of ways participants can implement the High Five messages (Delivery Strategy #1), read the following list generated by a group of youth involved in the *ENGAGE* workshop.

NOTES

Source: *Engage*, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College, Workshop Leader's Guide, Alternative Exercises for High 5 Messages.

Information - A Foundation for Successful Career Development

You'll recall that one of the roles of the career development facilitator is that of a broker of vital information. The "Exploration Outward component career development is important in all career transitions. Having solid information, even when the labour market is changing, is an essential foundation for career planning.

There are four types of useful foundation information:

Knowing: being aware of resources which help individuals understand the labour market,. How it is structured and how it works.

Planning: accessing information to plan the next career move - requirements, procedures, when and what is available.

Deciding: helping individuals sort through the information, sift out what is most critical to themselves and establish a career direction.

Doing: providing motivation for taking the next step successfully, whether that step is a job search, registering for an academic or training program, or starting a business.

A sound base of information coupled with targeted interventions help people at every stage of their career development process.

Making Sense of the Labour Market

Copy Chart onto Flip Chart

You already keep up with change through one or more of the following activities. Use this chart to look at common activities and the scope of information these activities best represent.

Perspective Activity	Local	Regional	National	Global
talking with friends, family and community members				
reading the local newspaper (e.g., Valley Views in Valleyview)				
reading a regional newspaper (e.g., The Edmonton Journal)				
reading the national paper (e.g., The Globe and Mail)				
reading an international newspaper (e.g., The International Herald or the New York Times)				
watching or listening to regional and national newscasts				
watching/listening to current events shows on TV or radio				
reading books and reports				
attending conferences, lectures, public forums				

Lead a discussion using the following questions

N.B. Think in terms of the present *and* the future. Research helps us to *predict* as well as keep up with changes in the labour market.

Each activity in this chart can become part of your labour market research with little extra effort. When engaged in any of these activities, simply ask yourself the following questions:

Source: *Everyday Career Development*. D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994.

1. Is it possible that this article/show/talk is even remotely related to career development or the labour market? (If "No," stop here; otherwise, continue.)
2. What connection does this have to the labour market?
3. What are the global implications on the labour market?
4. What are the national implications on the labour market?
5. What are the local implications on the labour market?
6. How do any of these implications connect with your own work?
7. How do any of these implications potentially influence your participants?

Optional Illustration

You may wish to illustrate the point by using some of the key points from the following *optional examples*:

Example A:

Newspaper article: "Red Deer man gives birth to his own alien grandson with six heads"

Reader: Job coach in a Rehabilitation Centre

Question #1

Is it possible that this article/show/talk is even remotely related to career development or the labour market? (If "No," stop here; otherwise, continue.)

Answer #1

No (although it's always arguable). Skip to the next article.

Example B:

Newspaper article: "Wood boycott heads to Japan"
"A.B.C. environmentalist says she is going to Japan to save trees in British Columbia . . . She says she is going to ask Japanese companies not to buy paper from the giant forest products company. . ."

Reader: Joan Bear, Whitecourt English teacher

Question #1

Is it possible that this article is even remotely related to career development or the labour market? (If "No," stop here; otherwise, continue.)

Source: *Everyday Career Development.* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994.

Answer #1

It seems reasonable that if this environmentalist is successful and Japan boycotts British Columbia forest products, it will have a significant impact on the work dynamic.

Question #2

What connection does this article have to the labour market?

Answer #2

First, the environmentalist's success may affect the flow of foreign money into Canada, having an overall adverse affect. Second, the woman's success may result in a direct loss of jobs in B.C.'s forestry sector, thereby hurting the B.C. economy. Third, there are bigger implications on the labour market generally in terms of the environmentalist versus natural resource worker.

Global/Internation Implications

Question #3

What are the global implications on the labour market of this article?

Answer #3

Globally, this article reflects a trend that everyone already knows about — the environmental movement. The article highlights that this movement is a tend rather than a fad and that natural resource industries will need to find new ways of doing things and representing themselves. It also indicates a global trend away from the use of natural resources and towards entirely different means of operating (e.g., less packaging, less paper, more items that are reusable).

National Implications

Question #4

What are the national implications on the labour market of this article?

Answer #4

From Canada's perspective, the environmental movement will mean massive restructuring of the economy because traditionally we have been natural-resource based. What if the movement gains even more strength and environmentalists lobby to have the original plans of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta restored to their natural state? Forestry is just a start for the movement.

Local Implications

Question #5

What are the local implications on the work dynamic of this article/show/talk topic?

Source: *Everyday Career Development.* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994.

Answer #5

Locally, this woman's work will actually be beneficial to Whitecourt, at least in the short-term. As the giant forest companies face boycotts, Whitecourt's own Millar-Western Industries may actually boom for a few years. As one of the most environmentally progressive forestry product companies in Canada, they will be supported or at least ignored by environmentalists — they do not use bleach, re-plant what they cut and no longer engage in clear-cutting. If Japan boycotts the others and buys from Millar-Western, Whitecourt may thrive for quite some time.

In the long-term, even more interesting prospects may be on the horizon for Whitecourt. If Millar-Western is truly an environmentally state-of-the-art forestry company, Whitecourt's economy could prosper as much by technology transfer as by forest product sales. Imagine selling Millar-Western's expertise to other forestry companies in B.C., the rest of Canada, South America and Eastern Europe! Whitecourt could see an international "Environmental Forestry Training Centre" that would bring people in from all over the world. Then, tourism dollars would pour in as visitors spend extra time for leisure purposes. Hotels, restaurants, tour and travel companies, craft shops and recreational organizations would develop and grow.

Personal Implications

Question #6

How do any of these implications connect with my own work as a career helper?

Answer #6

In the short-term, these implications do not connect with English directly. In the long-term, however, there are a variety of connections. A training centre with subsequent tourism activities would require educators, marketers and hospitality workers. All these people rely on exceptional communications skills, and that is part of the subject of English.

Implications for "Career Helper"

Question #7

How do any of these implications potentially influence my client/students?

Answer #7

Little is going to happen because of the proposed boycotting so soon that my Grade 12 students will be directly affected. Forestry product purchasing could shift significantly within the next two to three years, however, and this would have a direct impact on Grade 10 and 11 students. They will be more likely to able to find work in forestry in the community and, of course, the more work

Source: *Everyday Career Development.* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994.

there is in forestry the more spin-off businesses there are. This means that many more doors will be open to students in the community.

In the long run, the possibility of becoming and educational, environmental and tourism centre opens up an enormous number of options in terms of career paths within the community. These three sectors will need to be explored further.

Source: *Everyday Career Development.* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994.

TREND FEUD

TOPIC:

Trends

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify the high demand careers (according to one source)

OVERVIEW:

It can be frightening to think that we can spend years in school training for an occupation only to come out and find that there are no jobs available in that field. Although there is no crystal ball, many sources of information–like magazines–provide information about what occupations are, or will be, in demand.

MATERIALS:

- Feud Answer Board
- Bell (noisemaker)

TIME REQUIRED:

10 minutes

METHOD:

1. Reproduce the Answer Board on an overhead and cover up each answer with a piece of paper.

2. Tell the class that they are going to play a version of the game show "Family Feud." Divide the class into two teams and have them line up on either side of the classroom. Have the first members from each team come to the front of the room and stand at an equal distance from the bell.

3. Explain the game:

   - The top answers to a question are on the overhead. After the question is asked, the student who hits the bell first gets to respond to the question first. Then that student's team has the opportunity to continue providing answers. If the student who rings in first does not have a correct answer, s/he gives control to the other team.
   - The first student on that line of the team will provide the answer. If the answer is correct and is listed, uncover the response on the Feud Board as well as the number of points. If the answer does not appear on the board, the other team takes over.

continued...

Source: *Everyday Career Development.* D.E. Redekopp, Alberta Education, Special Education Branch, 1994.

- The second member of the controlling team now has a chance to provide a response. If the response is correct, uncover the answer again. If the answer is incorrect, it is considered a strike.
- Proceed through each team until either all the answers have been uncovered or the team has answered incorrectly three times (three strikes).
- If the team manages to uncover all the answers before striking out, it receives all the points. If the team strikes out, the other team has a chance to steal the points. To steal, the team has 30 seconds to come up with a correct answer. This first member of the team will decide which answer to present. At the end of 30 seconds, the host asks the first team member for the response. If it exists on the board, that team gets all the points uncovered. If the answer is incorrect, the opposing team gets the points. Uncover all the answers not identified.

4. Put up the first Feud Answer Board and start the game by asking the following question:

   According to the June, 1992 edition of *Teen Generation* magazine, what are the top 10 careers for the 1990's?

5. Proceed as outlined above.

6. Discuss:

   This question explored the top 10 careers. This is considered to be trend information. Based on what is happening in those occupations now and what people predict will occur, those occupations highlighted will experience significant growth. This trend information is everywhere! Magazines, newspapers, television, books, government agencies, and other organizations are constantly predicting what will happen in the future. Some of the information turns out to be accurate while other information proves to be wrong. Using trend information to predict occupational growth and decline can be a lot of fun and very informative. You will have a chance to look at some more trends in future classes.

Source: ***Heart Beats: Creative Awareness — Teacher's Guide and Activities*****, Carol Dunford, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College and Youth Works Society of Alberta, 1994.**

TREND FEUD

1.	Adult Educator	10 points
2.	Fund Raiser	10 points
3.	Financial Planner	10 points
4.	Career Counsellor	10 points
5.	Translator	10 points
6.	Marketing and Public Relations	10 points
7.	Computers	10 points
8.	Seniors Recreation Leader	10 points
9.	Environmental Law	10 points
10.	Community Health Practitioner	10 points

Source: *Heart Beats: Creative Awareness — Teacher's Guide and Activities*, Carol Dunford, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College and Youth Works Society of Alberta, 1994.

WHAT'S HOT?

TOPIC:

Trends

OBJECTIVE:

- Define and identify fads and trends

OVERVIEW:

It is said that, on average, a trend lasts about 10 years but a fad lasts only a few. We are all curious about what will happen in the future so people try to predict trends. It is interesting to note that a lot of trend information is based on the past. This exercise enables students to explore some of the fads and trends of the past.

MATERIALS:

- Activity Sheet
- Flipchart or poster paper/markers

TIME REQUIRED:

30-60 minutes

METHOD:

1. Hand out the Activity Sheet.

2. Discuss the difference between a trend and a fad. A fad is something short-lived: it is a quickly passing influence (for example, punk rockers). A trend is something that lasts longer, and has longer term implications. For example, computerization introduces new gadgets every year, but the whole computer trend will probably be around for some time.

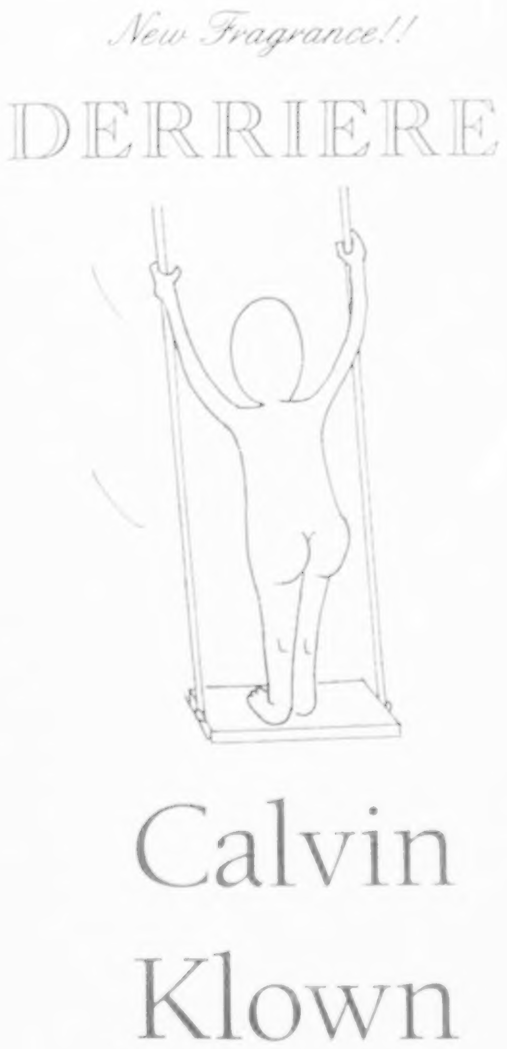
3. Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group a decade (*i.e.*, one group gets the 1950's, another the '60's, the '70's, and the '80's).

4. Have each group identify some fads from their decades as outlined on the Activity Sheet (for example, clothes of the '50's were poodle skirts, bobby socks, white T-shirts).

5. If time allows, have each group develop a creative way to present their information to the rest of the class (a poster, a rap, or something similar).

continued ...

Source: ***Heart Beats: Creative Awareness — Teacher's Guide and Activities*, Carol Dunford, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College and Youth Works Society of Alberta, 1994.**



6. Facilitate the following discussion:
   - What are some of the trends and fads of the '90's?
   - What causes these things to change?
   - We all try to keep up with the fads but it can be difficult. Think of someone that you would consider totally out of date. Why are they so untrendy? What advice would you give them on how to keep up to date?
   - When making career decisions, trend information is very valuable. Fads do not have much of an impact on occupations, but trends in the world of work have a significant impact on occupations.

Source: *Heart Beats: Creative Awareness — Teacher's Guide and Activities*, Carol Dunford, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College and Youth Works Society of Alberta, 1994.

Activity Sheet

WHAT'S HOT?

Your Decade ____________________

Describe what was "Hot" in your decade in the following areas:

Music

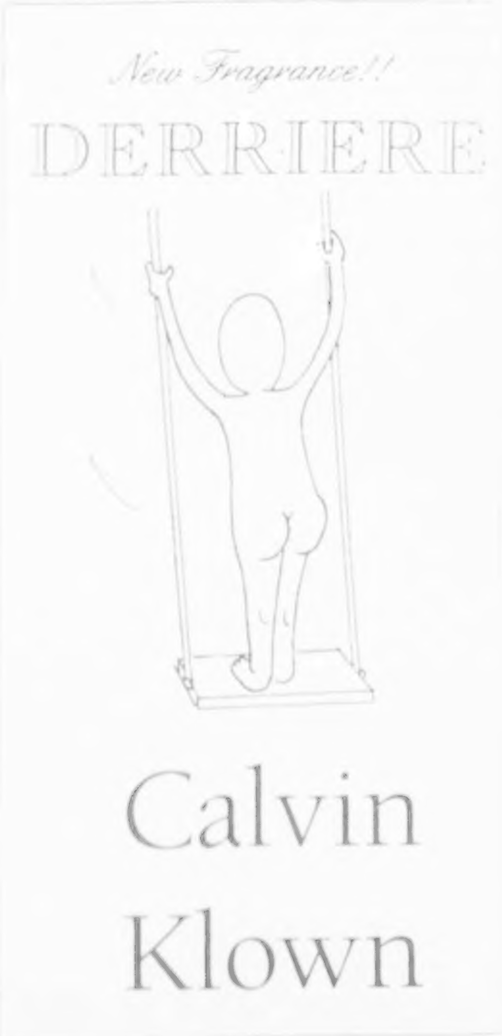
Clothes

Movies/Movie Stars

Slang/Sayings

Hobbies/Sports

Other Fads/Trends



Source: *Heart Beats: Creative Awareness — Teacher's Guide and Activities*, Carol Dunford, Centre for Career Development Innovation, Concordia College and Youth Works Society of Alberta, 1994.

Megatrends Option 2: The Hybrid Approach

In real life, trends are often interrelated. Changes in social values sometimes work in harmony with changes in the economic and political areas. Sometimes they can work in opposition. The Hybrid Approach integrates megatrends and their outcomes. Throughout the exercise, remember that the three megatrends are linked in some way, and that whatever happens in one will have an impact on the other in either a positive or negative way.

The hourglass suggests changes over time and the mixing of the grains (outcomes) as they pass through the centre. When the trends reach the bottom of the hourglass, they form new patterns.

It may help to think of trends as grains of sand of differing colours. The trend toward environmentalism might be green, the trend toward a healthy lifestyle might be pink, and the trend toward global competition might be yellow.

This approach is more difficult but it is more likely to help you identify a broader range of new demands for goods and services than in the previous exercise. By examining a combination of megatrends, it helps you see how trends in one area strengthen or weaken trends in other areas, and also the types of problems that have to be solved to meet the sometimes conflicting goals of society.

Step 1: **Identify and examine some of the major trends in society. Trends may be related to social, economic, or political areas.**

Example: Environmental Awareness
Healthy Lifestyles
Global Competition

Step 2: **Identify concrete outcomes of the individual trends to date.**

Example: Recycling
New Uses for Recycled Materials
Physical Fitness Programs/Centres
Recreational Activities
Wildlife/National Parks
Environmental Assessments
Environmental Lobbyists Influence
Waste Management Schemes
Research into Environmentally Friendly Products

Source: *Steady As We Go: A Counselling Program for Career Drifters,* by Mildred Cahill and [illegible] Publications Ltd., 1994.

Green Label Marketing
Industry Shutdowns
Reduced Job Security
Shift from Manufacturing to Service Industries
Technology in the Workplace

Step 3: **Examine how the trends either reinforce or conflict with each other. Estimate the relative strengths and weaknesses of the related trends. Project the possible direction/redirection the trends will take as a result of these interactions.**

Example: A clean environment is healthy, and, because people are more aware of potential harm of pollution, they are pushing governments to set higher environmental standards; environmental standards costly to businesses who must compete with countries where environmental standards are lower; corporations have reduced labour costs by laying off workers, contracting out, etc and this has created workplace stress and financial stress, both of which are injurious to health.

The growing amount of information about health/environment issues and the strength of the environmental lobbyist will likely continue to prompt governments to raise environmental standards and to support research into products and processes that will contribute to a clean environment. The threat of losing jobs, however, will likely make governments cautious about legislating standards, and this will slow progress in making polluting companies environmentally responsible.

Step 4: **Look at combinations of outcomes to determine possible demands for goods and services in the future. Some may be linked to new values that people have developed and some may arise from the need to solve society's problems. Be creative.**

Example: One of the major sources of pollution and stress in urban centres is the automobile. Reducing the need for daily commuting would help alleviate the problem. Public transportation systems are costly. Allowing people to work closer to their homes would be a cheaper alternative. It would also reduce the risks of accidents and reduce the costs of maintaining roads. New management systems are needed if large corporations are going to decentralize their operations to allow people to work closer to home. Corporations will need people to develop communications systems that can link employees to the head office by computer or telephone.

Source: ***Steady As We Go: A Counselling Program for Career Drifters,*** **by Mildred Cahill and Sandra Martland, Lugus Publications Ltd., 1994.**

Environmental awareness has generated interest in wildlife and wilderness. Most Canadians live in large cities and do not have the opportunity to see wildlife in their natural habitat. Healthy lifestyles mean that more Canadians enjoy physical activity. However, urban Canadians will likely not want to sacrifice too much in the way of comforts. In more remote areas of the country, there could be opportunities in tourism for those who can satisfy the yearnings of people to have contact with nature by supplying comfortable accommodations and the accompanying tourist services, and by offering guided boat tours, hiking, and so on.

Global competition has created a demand for technological advances, particularly in the areas of information gathering and analysis, communications, and transportation. Experience has demonstrated that society needs more responsible ways of managing resources and enforcing pollution laws. Applying this accumulated computer technology to such problems will require scientists and engineers who can take advantage of the technological capabilities as they develop. It will demand mathematicians and computer specialists who can develop new ways of analyzing the vast amounts of information.

Many Canadians are moving away from the major cities because they feel rural areas offer a better quality of life. Some corporations could take advantage of the trend by moving their operations to rural areas. Communications technology has advanced to the point where this is feasible for many types of businesses. Many rural areas would welcome the jobs that this shift would bring. To attract such business and to maintain the pleasant environment that would attract such business in the first place, there will be a need for town planners, economic development specialists, and promoters.

Step 5: **Consider the effects of various trends on the probability of these anticipated demands being realized and on the pace of development of those demands. Discard those that have little chance of being realized, no matter how worthy.**

Example: In the first case, the trend toward decentralization is likely to be slow because corporations and institutions have huge investments in their central facilities, and their management structures are built around a centralized approach. Many managers may be reluctant to change the way they organize their operations and unwilling to take the risk. There is evidence that some decentralization is occurring, but at a slow pace.

Source: *Steady As We Go: A Counselling Program for Career Drifters*, by Mildred Cahill and Sandra Martland, Lugus Publications Ltd., 1994.

In the second case, adventure tourism is likely to become more popular, although the demand will be limited. Companies involved in waste management have been focusing on the potential for setting up dumps and incinerators in rural and remote parts of the country. This could pose a threat to the tourist industry and is a risk that people trying to compete for tourist dollars will have to assess.

In the third case, applications of new technology to environmental problems will depend on research money available. The trend of corporations and public institutions toward reducing costs suggests funds will be limited, at least in the short term. Crises such as the collapse of the northern cod stocks tend to generate support for relevant research. Most funding will likely be tied to such current problems. Long-term prospects for financial support of a broader range of problems may be better, depending on the state of the economy.

In the fourth case, such a shift might be advantageous to employees and to the host communities. However, some employees the company wants to keep might prefer city life. Even if a company found savings in moving its operations out of an urban centre, where property taxes are high and land costly, managers might be concerned about recruiting workers in an area where the skills do not match the job requirements. On-the-job training would be expensive and nullify the savings found elsewhere. Government programs to train work forces are unreliable in that the focus changes from time to time. It is unlikely that there will be a significant shift in corporate activity from urban to rural areas.

Step 6: **Identify the natural advantages/disadvantages that your specific community, regions, province has to meet those demands for goods and services.**

- same as in Simple Approach

Step 7: **Identify the abilities/interests/skills you have or could acquire that would meet the resulting demands for employment or business.**

- same as in Simple Approach

Source: *Steady As We Go: A Counselling Program for Career Drifters*, by Mildred Cahill and Sandra Martland, Lugus Publications Ltd., 1994.

CAREER INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SELF-HELP TOOLS

There are many career information resources and tools available to meet the information needs of individuals at different phases of career development. The "tricks" in career information are meeting the right need at the right time, not overwhelming the individual with too much information and helping the person make the information work for them. These are challenges!

As you're gathering information, recall the four functions of career information:

> Knowing — knowledge resources to help individuals understand the labour market, how it is structured and how it works.
>
> Planning — information the individual needs to plan their next career move - requirements, procedures, where and what is available.
>
> Deciding — resources which assist the individual to sort through the information, sift out what is most critical to themselves and establish a career direction.
>
> Doing — resources to provide motivation for taking the next step successfully, whether that step is job search, résumé preparation, application writing, or seeking references.

This structure is just one way of looking at career information but it may be a useful guide to co-ordinators to help judge the adequacy and thoroughness of the available information materials.

The following are resources currently available through Human Resources Development Canada (order by fax: (819) 953-7260).

KNOWING

Two products will be especially useful in responding to this aspect of career information need. *Career Directions* and *Career Moves* are two tools which assist people in understanding specific areas of the world of work.

Career Directions is a publication which provides detailed information on 160 occupants that do not require university as a prerequisite to enter. Each profile contains two parts. The first provides information on the occupation itself while the others describes people best suited to the occupation. Since each profile is contained in two pages, they are easily photocopied.

Career Moves is a series of eight booklets, each dealing with a broad occupational area. Examples include Health and Medicine and Sales and Services.

PLANNING

A good example of a planning tool is the *National Guide to College and University Programmes*. This publication lists all full-time and part-time regular credit programs and continuing education programs offered at over 400 Canadian universities and community colleges. We recommend that all participants who are not already post-secondary graduates have this available and accessible. All local libraries should have this as well.

DECIDING

The computer program, *Interoptions*, assists people in deciding on occupational options. Based upon the Canadian Work Preference Inventory, this tool measures five interest factors, determines the user's profile and suggests occupations which match that profile. There are almost 500 occupations in the database. A session lasts about 15 minutes.

DOING

The video package *Getting Your Foot in the Door* (28) minutes), is specifically geared to stimulate clients to assume responsibility in their job search and includes tips which enhance the ability of individuals to become more proactive. The people in the video are actual job seekers, not actors, who relate their personal experiences as they happened to them. A companion text is being developed as well.

The following *Self-Help* series (also available from HRDC) presents several exercises to help participants work their way through the major components of job search. It is divided into six sections:

The Job Hunt Preparation Checklist will help clients evaluate themselves in various areas and will give them ideas about what they may want to try;

Looking at Yourself gives tools to help clients review their past experiences, their education, the skills they have developed through hobbies and volunteer work;

Planning and Organizing Your Search present exercises to help in résumé writing and in job market identification;

Preparing for Your Interview provides tips on things to do before, during and after the interview)

Examining Your Options helps explore other opportunities available;

Developing a Realistic Budget present tools to use in determining current financial status.

The Job Interview Video

A 27-minute video available in both English and French (concurrently on the same cassette) to review strategies and tactics in interviews.

It offers vignettes of various interview candidates preparing themselves in terms of:

- developing a positive attitude
- demonstrating enthusiasm
- being punctual and prepared for the interview
- doing specific research for the person/organization
- visualizing success
- acknowledging interview jitters
- preparing suitable responses to difficult interview questions
- concluding an interview effectively
- dealing constructively with rejection
- using personal contacts to "network"
- being persistent in job search
- maintaining self confidence.

The subject is treated seriously but with some humour for an upbeat mood. The connective theme is of "mental imaging", a concept borrowed from sports psychology. It is closed-captioned for hearing impaired persons. (A companion Facilitator's Guide will be provided.)

The Job Search Planner

Designed originally for HRCC clients, nevertheless this pocket size planner has a useful inventory of check points in the job-search process for all job seekers.

We hope you will make these resources highly visible and accessible and that you will recommend their use as self-exploration materials in the career development component of your project.

There is also a wealth of information available locally (check with your Regional HRDC representative and local organizations involved in labour market and career information).

The Internet is a source of a great deal of information. The trick is knowing where to start your search. The **Portfolio Builder** includes an list of useful Internet sites in its Appendix.

Chapter 7

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES

This chapter pulls together the essential labour market themes that have been woven throughout the previous chapters and presents them in one place, in an easy-to-use format. Following each theme is a brief explanation for practitioners. The shaded textboxes contain tips for practitioners to pass on to their clients.

A. EMERGING THEMES IN THE NEW LABOUR MARKET

THEME 1: ALL THE COMPONENTS MAKING UP THE LABOUR MARKET SERVE TO AFFECT ONE BOTTOM LINE FOR THE CLIENT — SUPPLY AND DEMAND

A good, solid knowledge of all the factors influencing the labour market is an asset to any member of the labour force. However, basic information on supply and demand is probably the bottom line affecting the client or student's position in the labour market. It is helpful to know whether the market is already or soon to be flooded with qualified people in a selected occupation or whether there is a present or upcoming shortage of particular workers.

Tips/Research Suggestions

Use information sources to gather supply and demand information before making decisions. These sources could include:

- the education or training institution being considered;
- the regional economist publications;
- unions and associations;
- CEC counsellors;
- local service groups who are willing to share information on the occupations of their members; and
- Chamber of Commerce.

THEME 2: SOURCES OF INFORMATION ARE EVERYWHERE. ONLY A LACK OF CREATIVE INVESTIGATION LIMITS THE NUMBER OF SOURCES

There is an abundance of reports and books, associations, community and government offices, support groups, steering committees and so on, that provide valuable information helpful to a client or student who is making career choices.

An often overlooked resource is an annual report. It can list companies, government agencies and contact people with labour market information useful to a practitioner

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information,* by Diane Alfred and Elaine O'Reilly, Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995.

and client or student, and often includes reports on new trends that are influencing an industry or the people who work in it. Comments may also be made regarding the relevance of training being provided in a certain field.

Some national and provincial sources of information and the type of information they provide appear in Appendix A.

Tips/Research Suggestions

Ask, ask, ask! Don't be afraid to ask anyone for help or suggestions. Ask your neighbours, former teachers, association receptionists, relatives and anyone you meet on the job, e.g., the TV repairer or computer technician who installs your printer. Always ask the person who gives you some information for another name for you to contact.

THEME 3: USING LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION IN CAREER PLANNING IS A PROCESS THAT HAS TO BE LEARNED AND PRACTISED

Clients or students need to be taught what questions will give them useful labour market information. They need to practise until the questions come automatically and they need to learn where to get the answers to those questions. In Chapter 5 some simple questions for those wanting to gather labour market information were suggested.

- Does the present situation represent the future situation?
- What predictions are reliable?
- Where can I find further information to support or refute these predictions?
- Is a particular article biased to make an argument for a lobby group?
- How will consumer behaviour affect opportunities?
- What public policies will impinge on this career?
- How many workers are already in this field?
- How many new workers will be needed in the future?
- How will technology change the industry?
- What is the next most likely position to move into?

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information,* by Diane Alfred and Elaine O'Reilly, Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995.

- Is this occupation mobile across the country?
- From which training programs do employers prefer to hire?

Some of the above questions were taken from *Improved Career Decision Making in a Changing World* (Ettinger, 1991) and *Occupational Outlook* (Alfred, 1992).

Tips/Research Suggestions

Read the business section of the newspaper. Practise asking labour market questions about what you read. Study the want ads and ask yourself what you can learn from the types and numbers of job descriptions, the salaries, etc. Check your interpretations with your friends or people in the business.

THEME 4: TECHNOLOGY HAS AN IMPACT ON VIRTUALLY EVERY OCCUPATION AND ON THE TRAINING AND EDUCATION THAT ANY MEMBER OF THE LABOUR FORCE WILL HAVE

This theme encompasses two areas of labour. First, technology affects training and education of workers in general. There is a constant call for more highly skilled employees in industry. Human resource reports beg for workers who are better trained in maths, science and technology in order to keep up with the new developments in a field.

Tips/Research Suggestions

Check first with employers or associations and unions for what high-tech skills are in demand and what advanced equipment is being used, and then make sure that the training program or institution you choose is up-to-date enough to give you these skills and knowledge.

Second, technology will impose on managers as well as other workers, to broaden their knowledge base so they can deal with new developments, new problems, a new breed of clients and employees with more techno-knowledge. The need for new management skills is mentioned throughout the book, crossing all sectors. In Chapter 2 a summary of necessary generic supervisory skills is listed for the new, globally competitive business.

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information,* by Diane Alfred and Elaine O'Reilly, Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995.

Tips/Research Suggestions

Take note of what to train in, if you want to be an effective supervisor in the new economy.

No matter what your technical expertise, study management skills.

No matter what your management expertise, study technological developments.

Skills Required in the Future	Knowledge Required
• Manage technological change	• Understanding people
• Relate to company values	• General business knowledge
• Be creative	• Labour and government regulations
•Take calculated risks	• Understanding the total organization
• Be a conceptual thinker	• General knowledge about computers
• Manage stress	• Technical knowledge

SOURCE: *Compete to Win Research Report*, Gilmore & Associates 1990

THEME 5: COMPUTER SILLS HAVE BECOME GENERIC, TRANSFERABLE SKILLS, IN DEMAND IN EVERY OCCUPATION

Over and over again the same trend was evident — the demand for computer skills in every occupation, from manufacturing tool-and-die maker to environmental scientist, from accountant to dance choreographer, from teacher to retail sales manager. Even artists need knowledge of computers, as graduates in graphic design and interior design have discovered.

Tips/Research Suggestions

Make sure you have computer skills. Check the program of study to see if it includes computer training. If not, take extra training at night or during school breaks or after you finish the program.

THEME 6: MULTI-SKILLING IS MORE AND MORE REQUIRED IN THE NEW ECONOMY

Repeated in the industry human resource studies was the increased value that specific skills training in two or more areas provides, e.g., engineers with finance or accounting skills, scientists with marketing skills, tool-and-die makers with welding skills, electronics technologists with team leadership skills, advertising executives

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information,* by Diane Alfred and Elaine O'Reilly, Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995.

with knowledge of computing animation, marketing specialists with international law knowledge, administrative assistants with desktop publishing skills.

Tips/Research Suggestions

As you investigate occupations, ask what extra skill training is of added value to the new entrant in the field. Ask what kind of jobs are being phased out or what layoffs occurred. Find out what skills are involved which have to be picked up by the remaining workers and train yourself in these areas.

THEME 7: THE COMPONENTS OF THE LABOUR MARKET ARE INTERWOVEN TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT CHANGES IN STRUCTURE RELATE TO SEVERAL LM COMPONENTS AT ONCE.

Because the labour market components are so intertwined discussion of any one component often involves discussion of several other components. Therefore, a structural change can be affected by several LM factors. A good example is the new flatter organizational structure which is related to global marketing, the information era, retraining and tightening economics. As each of these areas is discussed, the relationship to the new structure becomes evident.

In Chapter 2, there is a summary of what the new entrant to the labour market can expect in the new organization, and Chapter 4 highlights the skills needed to succeed.

- Problem solving for customer satisfaction is something you will have to do.
- Make more decisions on the job.
- Train yourself to work in a team.
- Use the employment interview to talk about your knowledge of customer service.
- Learn leadership and presentation skills.
- Expect to be continually training on-the-job.
- Expect to gain a raise in pay for more skills or knowledge acquired but not to move up the organizational ladder. The room at the top is diminishing, and organizations are spreading laterally, yet still looking for ways to motivate employees.

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information,* by Diane Alfred and Elaine O'Reilly, Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995.

Tips/Research Suggestions

Expect that any information you receive will change. Check several sources of information and ask about different labour market influences to get a whole picture. Change in any component may cause a chain reaction that will influence your original source of information.

THEME 8: IN NEWSPAPERS, JOURNALS, BOOKS, REPORTS, STUDIES AND BROCHURES AIMED AT YOUTH, EMPLOYERS, EMPLOYEES, PRACTITIONERS, STUDENTS AND TEACHERS, THE SAME MESSAGE REOCCURS: THE GROWTH AREA WILL BE IN SERVICES; EXPECT LESS JOB SECURITY; AND MANY PEOPLE WILL BE SELF-EMPLOYED

At the same time as we are told that many of us can expect to work in the service area and be self-employed, many areas are mentioned as opportunities for employment: services to the aging baby boomers, including financial planning, recreation and physical therapy; environment; systems analysis and programming; exporting and international marketing; and telecommunications.

Tips/Research Suggestions

Think creatively about your options and ways of linking your expertise with growth areas of the economy. For example, consider preparing yourself with expertise in a field that includes small business management. If science is not your area, think about a service you might offer to those involved in the field. If international marketing is out of your range, figure out a service you can offer those involved in that field. If every business needs the benefit of programmers and analysts, and it is not in your realm, how could you fit into that market e.g., a matching service, providing technical people for contract positions with firms?

CONCLUSION

Many people love the excitement of a marketplace. The challenge of getting the best value for what they have to offer is thrilling. A little bit of extra knowledge about a product or service sometimes secures an exceptional deal.

Having had a brief tour of the labour market, practitioners can see what knowledge a client or student would need to be an effective bargaining agent in a constantly shifting arena. The vendors change their offerings and prices in a very irregular, hard-to-predict fashion, due to economic, social and technological developments that are constantly interjected into the market. New stalls spring up and old ones disappear suddenly. Wandering among the stalls will be a mix of naive and expert barterers.

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information,* by Diane Alfred and Elaine O'Reilly, Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995.

Practitioners have the opportunity to play an important part in preparing people to move about and deal in the labour market. Together, they can explore and define informational needs, gather information, organize what they collect, analyze and evaluate the information at hand and decide which action plan would best suit the goal.

The new Canadian economy calls for efficient use of the information that is readily available to the population. Learning to locate and use easily accessible data enables clients and students to effectively enter the labour force in a manner that suits their abilities and the changing needs of the labour market.

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information,* by Diane Alfred and Elaine O'Reilly, Canadian Career Development Foundation, 1995.

Commonly Asked Questions

In the following table are some questions that people often ask about training. In the columns beside the questions are some suggestions for finding answers. This is a starting point but the job of completing the investigation rests with you.

QUESTIONS	*SOURCES*	*ACTIVITIES*
*What can I do with "xx" education or training? *What field can I get into with my present skills/ background?	***Job Futures**, Volume 2 will show you where graduates in a certain field of study found work and will demonstrate possible links to other careers. [http://hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/english/index.html] *Placement reports in the Placement Centres of **colleges, universities and private institu-tions** [http://www.workinfonet.ca/user/link.html?newcatno=3] are available to you. You can find out where graduates have been hired and ask the centre to connect you to some graduates for an interview. * Human Resource personnel in a company or organization can provide information on what positions might use this specific training and they may be able to connect you with employees in the field for interview purposes. *"***Canada Prospects. Canada's Guide to Training and Employment***" (Free) is an excellent source of information on occupations and training needs. Order from Canadian Career Information Partnership. [http://www.globalx.net/ocd/prospects/index.html]	- **Read** placement reports - **Find** out where graduates have been hired - **Interview** some graduates - **Ask** personnel officers what they would hire a person with that background to do; - **Ask** for names of people in the field and interview them; - **Order** *Canada Prospects. Canada's Guide to Training and Employment* (Free).

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information - Facilitator Guide,* (Draft Version)

QUESTIONS	*SOURCES*	*ACTIVITIES*
*What training do I need to do work as a "zz"? *What aptitudes (abilities) and interests would be helpful in this occupation?	*Career resource centres and libraries have books and often have computers with hookup to the Internet for information on occupations. ***Job Futures** - in Volume 1 choose an occupation from an alphabetical list and look up the "training needed" section ***NOC** describes over 25,000 job titles and is available in binder form in HRCC offices, libraries, high schools, community colleges, universities, career centres. ***HRDC Labour Market Information** has occupational profiles with training requirements listed. ***Sector Council Studies** [http://www.workinfonet.ca/user/link.html?newsubno=215] provide descriptions of industry occupations and their training and skill requirements. ***Yellow Pages**. Phone "zz" workers listed in the yellow pages and ask them for information. ***Associations, Unions**. Ask associations and unions to tell you what background is required and what background they prefer. [http://204.101.252.110/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/english/volume1/assoc.html] * **Human resource personnel.** Ask human resource personnel what training they look for in a "zz." *Contact the **Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship Provincial and Territorial Offices**. [http://hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/spi/nos/redconte.html] and ask for information. *Canada Career Information Partnership publishes "***Canada Prospects. Canada's Guide to Training and Employment***." (Free) [http://www.globalx.net/ocd/prospects/index.html] ***CHOICES** program describes training and skill requirements for occupations. Trial version available online. [http://www.careerware.com/prodcana.html]	- **Ask** for books on the occupation - **Read** the descriptions in the industry studies - **Phone** "Z" workers listed in the yellow pages and ask them for information - **Ask** associations and union to tell you what background they require and what they prefer - **Ask** human resource personnel what training they require to hire a "Z" - **Order** *Canada Prospects. Canada's Guide to Training and Employment* (Free)

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information - Facilitator Guide,* (Draft Version)

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QUESTIONS	*SOURCES*	*ACTIVITIES*
* Will there be work in this field when I'm finished training/studying in 3-4 years? * Will my knowledge be up-to-date in 3-4 years? * Where can I get work when I finish my training?	* **Regional Economists Office** provides reports on labour market trends, semi-annual economic review, industry sector reports, and projections for future demand. [http://lmi-imt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/lmi.html] * **HRCC Labour Market Analysts** provide newspaper vacancy reports and profiles of employment demands. [http://lmi-imt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/lmi.html] * **Newspapers**, business section are a good source of what's happening in the labour market. [http://www.canoe.ca] * **Industry Canada** provides provincial industrial overviews. [http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc_ecnmy/mera/engdoc/05.html] ***Associations, unions**, will provide information in their field. [http://204.101.252.110/hrdc/corp/stratpol/jobs/english/volume1/assoc.html] * **Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade** can give you information for your local area.	- **Gather** reports available from economists and HRCC offices such as profiles of employment demands, labour market trends, semi-annual review, industry sector reports (monthly summaries of business/labour newspaper articles) - **Scan** the career section and want ads for job vacancies or ask HRCC office if they have newspaper vacancy reports - **Read** in Job Futures percentage of graduates who got jobs, projected number of graduates, projected number and geographical distribution of job openings - **Read** COPS Supply and Demands Reports - **List** company names that came up in the previous steps, and you will have some contact ideas - **Search** the Directory of Canadian Associations and lists of businesses in the library - **Read** trade journals - **Phone** associations, unions, companies and ask for their projections - **Interview** people in the field

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Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information - Facilitator Guide*, (Draft Version)

The following pages are a guide to be used in the activities suggested in the preceding charts. There are questions which can be adapted by the client who undertakes to find some of the information available. For people inexperienced in interviewing others, these can also be used in role playing to practise the interview beforehand.

QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR TRAINING/EDUCATION COMPONENT

To the placement, co-op, or program co-ordinators

1) Can you tell me what industry or sector some of the graduates with "X" education are working in?
2) Are you able to suggest any companies that hire from this program that I could contact for an information interview?
3) Are there any graduates who would be willing to talk to me about career opportunities with an "X" education?
4) Is there any other route, you know of, to get a similar education or training?
5) Can you direct me to someone who might know?

To the graduates

1) How did you choose your training program?
2) What area did you hope to get work in? Did you succeed?
3) If not, what skills were you lacking for that occupation?
3) How did you get your present job? Why did this company hire you?
4) What skills or abilities are useful on this job? What further skills would you recommend?
5) How will you be upgrading in the future? Toward what position?
6) Into what other areas were your fellow graduates hired?

To the human resource personnel

1) What types of positions in your company are open to people with "X" training/education?
2) Have you hired any of these graduates lately?
3) Where are some of those past graduates now?
4) What skills or aptitudes do you recommend adding to that training?
5) Is there anyone in A, B or C occupation who would be willing to be contacted for an information interview?

To the association or union

1) Could you give me some information on what background is necessary to be a "Z"?
2) How many people in this field have diplomas as opposed to degrees? or How many people in this field have journeypersons, papers as opposed to just the training without the apprenticeship certification exam?
3) Is there a difference in pay between these two? Is there a difference in what movement they have in a company or occupational field?
4) Is there anyone you could refer me to for an information interview?

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information,* (Draft Version)

To the "Z" in the yellow pages

1) I'm a student trying to make a program choice and I am looking for some information about "Z" occupation. Would you be able to answer a few questions?
2) Is there a better time I might call you? or Is there someone you know of who *would* have a few minutes to answer my questions?
3) What sort of training or education do I need to be a "Z"?
4) What job title did you have before you had this job?
5) What skills outside what is taught in the formal school program would improve my chances of getting into the field?
6) If you were hiring for this position, what background would you choose?

To the human resource personnel

1) What training does this company require to be a "Z"?
2) Do you prefer a degree or diploma?
3) What institutions have you hired from in the past?
4) What institutions would you recommend for training?
5) If two people applied with degrees/diplomas/certificates from the same place, what extra aptitudes, skills or experience would tip the scale in favour of one?

QUESTIONS FOR OCCUPATIONAL DESCRIPTION/MOBILITY

To the association or union

1) I'm looking for information on "Y" occupation — job description and ideas for career growth.
2) Do you have brochures with occupational descriptions in this area? Any promotional videos?
3) Do you have the names of any people in the field who would be willing to give an information interview or speak to a group in my career seminar/guidance class?

To the human resource personnel

1) I'm doing some research on mobility in the field of "Y". Can you give me some idea of where the people in that department of your company came from? What jobs they had before they became 'Y's.
2) Do you have any interesting stories of unusual job moves? What factors do you think were most important in making that particular case happen?
3) Can you give me the name of someone in that department who would be willing to tell me a little about their career path?

To the people in the field

1) What was your first job title after you finished school?
2) Where did you go from there?
3) Was there a choice you made during your career that you think was instrumental in getting you to this position? What was it?

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information*, (Draft Version)

4) If you were looking to hire someone for this position, what background would you look for?
5) If I didn't have a "Y" diploma/degree/tradespaper is there something else that could lead me to working in this department or occupation?
6) What would you like your next occupational move to be?
7) Do you know of anyone who might have some relevant information for me knowing my interest in this aspect of "Y"?

QUESTIONS FOR LABOUR STANDARD COMPONENT

To the associations, unions, companies

1) What is the entry level salary range for "Z"?
2) What could a person expect to be making in five years, in 10 years?
3) What was the last union agreement for wages/salary in this field? What are the benefits?
4) What role does the union play in supporting the worker?
5) Is there opportunity for increasing salary for example through overtime or upgraded skills?
6) How do employers in general respond to women/men (handicapped, minorities, aboriginal people) in this field?
7) Are there any support groups for the above to which you could refer me?
8) Can you give me the name of someone employed in the field who has overcome barriers to get the job?
9) How would I go about researching companies to make sure I choose an environmentally conscientious one?
10) Is there any material you recommend that would guide me in interviews with employers to make sure they are safety conscious and follow the standards?

To the co-ordinators or deans

1) Have you had any graduates in this field who have had to overcome barriers to employment?
2) Can you refer me to those people for information interviews and advice on coping skills?
3) Do you have a list of employers from co-op or placement services whom you would recommend as equitable and supportive?
4) Are there any groups or associations you could refer me to for support in choosing to go down this road?

QUESTIONS FOR THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND COMPONENT

To the associations, unions, companies

1) How many people work in this occupation?
2) How many new workers are hired each year? Last year?
3) How many do you predict will be needed this year or next?
4) What age bracket are the majority of workers in?

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information,* (Draft Version)

5) Do you foresee a larger need in the future due to retirement?
6) Which industries hire more of this occupation?
7) Is there a certain specialty which is more in demand?

To the people on the field

1) How many people were laid off or hired in your department?
2) What was the reason for the lay-offs?
3) Do you feel this is a secure occupation?
4) If you were laid off tomorrow, where would be your best chance of getting a job in this field? In what similar fields could you look with your experience?
5) What would you recommend that I do to improve my chances of getting work?

Source: *Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information*, (Draft Version)

What do you do in your spare time?

Part A: Leisure activities

1. Distribute copies of the "recreational interest" list to each participant. Ask them to circle the three activities in the list that they most enjoy in their spare time.

Recreational Interests

- biking
- bowling
- camping/hiking
- cooking
- making crafts
- doing volunteer work
- eating in restaurants
- going to movies
- going to parties
- listening to music
- playing cards
- doing sports
- reading
- roller blading
- shopping
- skating
- skiing
- swimming
- talking on the telephone
- "vegging out"
- visiting friends
- watching television
- working out

2. When each has chosen three activities, draw a circle on the chalkboard for every participant, and write each person's name inside a circle.

3. Ask participants to compare their activity choices with those of others in the group. If they share at least two activities with someone else, have them draw a line between their circle and the other person's on the board. If you have no (or just one) activity in common with someone, do not connect your circle with that person's.

4. Look at the lines connecting the circles and answer the following questions.
    (a) Who is connected to the most people? ____________
    (b) How many lines connect females to females? ____________
    (c) How many lines connect males to males? ____________
    (d) How many lines connect males to females? ____________
    (e) What general observation can you make about the cross-gender connections drawn on the chalkboard?

    ____

Source: *CareerWorld* by M. Balanchuk & J.G. Freeman, Trifolium Books Inc., 1994.

Part B: Gender-typed interests

"Gender-typing" refers to a tendency to associate an activity more with one gender than the other. An interest in certain leisure activities is often gender-typed. Study the list of leisure activities again. Then complete this chart by writing three recreational interests usually associated with each gender.

"Female" Interests	"Male" Interests

Networks and Gender-Typing of Interests

How do networks relate to gender-typed interests? Networks tend to build around common interests. When interests are largely restricted to one gender, networks will also tend to include only one gender. A problem arises in the workplace when networks are restricted by gender. Here's why:

In employment, it's an advantage when the network to which you belong has people of fairly high standing. These people can provide more opportunities compared to people at your own level. However, if your network is based on gender-typed interests and if it includes no upper management people of your gender, this advantage will be lost.

Who are the people of high status in your community?

In your community, is there a tendency for one gender to be overrepresented in high-status positions?

By telephoning the appropriate places of employment, scanning recent issues of your local newspaper or asking other people who know your community well, find out the name of the people who know your community well, find out the name of the person who occupies each of the following high-status positions in your community. Fill in as many of the blanks in this chart as you can.

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Source: *CareerWorld* by M. Balanchuk & J.G. Freeman, Trifolium Books Inc., 1994

Position	Name
Mayor or Reeve	
Government Representative	
School Principal	
Vice-Principal	
School Superintendent	
Fire Chief	
Police Chief	
Bank Manager	
Medical Officer of Public Health	
Judge	
Coroner	
Mother's Boss	
Father's Boss	
Your Boss	
Other Family Member's Boss	

1. How many men did you list? ______________________________

2. How many women did you list? ______________________________

3. With a partner, discuss what your findings indicate about employment networks.

Exclusion From Networks

Did your list of people in high-status positions and the lists of others in your group have more men than women? Even today, most people in high-status positions are male. These men often share a system of contacts, or a network, based on mutual interests in "male" activities. These networks frequently exclude women.

It's easy to see that networks are a barrier if you are excluded from them. However, they function as a support if you belong to them. Because of this dual function, networks are similar to mentorship relationships.

Source: *CareerWorld* by M. Balanchuk & J.G. Freeman, Trifolium Books Inc., 1994.

Forming networks at school

You may not yet have a lot of networking experience in employment situations. But you have probably learned some strategies for making friends.

1. Work in a group of three to five participants and consider the following scenario.

> *You are a new college student, who has transferred from another city. How might you go about building a network of friends?*

In your group, make a list of as many network-building strategies as you can. Be as creative as possible. (Use an additional page of your journal if you need more room).

2. (a) At school, many people want to be part of a network of friends. Working with a partner, list five reasons why a person seeks a network of friends.

   (b) Now give three reasons for not becoming a member of a network at school.

3. In a whole group discussion, compare the advantages and the disadvantages of networks at school.

Workplace networks differ from school networks in several important ways:

- Networks at school have a primarily social function. Networks in the workplace often have a career-advancement function as well.
- Networks in school are divided into two tiers (students are at one level, teachers at another). Networks in the workplace can cross levels.
- Networks at school are open to change, but networks in the workplace are resistant to change. For this reason, it is easier to become part of a network at school than it is to become part of a network in the workplace.

In your journal, list another difference between these two types of networks.

Source: *CareerWorld* by M. Balanchuk & J.G. Freeman, Trifolium Books Inc., 1994.

Overcoming exclusion from a network

Consider the scenario presented below.

> *You are a new employee in a company and you perceive that you are excluded from the power network. There are other new employees in the same situation.*

1. Write two suggestions outlining what you and other new employees could do, as a group, to offset this problem.

2. Now, meet with three other group members and share your ideas. Could you try out some of these ideas in your own job or school situation?

Summing Up

In your journal, answer these questions on your own. Then share your answers with the group.

1. How would being excluded from a network at work or school affect your feelings and/or your thoughts about yourself?

2. Could this exclusion have an effect on your success in that setting?

3. How do consequences of being excluded from a school network differ from the consequences of being excluded from a network in the workplace?

Source: *CareerWorld* by M. Balanchuk & J.G.Freeman, Trifolium Books Inc., 1994.

Networking:

A network is an informal group of people (and all the people they know) who can help a job seeker. A network is meant to be "grown." It starts with who the job seeker knows and expandes outward. The principle is to have as many people as possible providing the job seeker with information. Ten people can obtain more information than one lone job seeker. Below is a typical list of categories of people who most job seekers already know. This is the basis of a network.

friends, relatives, neighbours
parents, friends of parents
former classmates, teachers
people who provide services (doctor, dentist, banker, hairdresser, mechanic)
members, leaders, teachers of religious organizations
former co-workers, supervisors, other work contacts
members of volunteer or community groups.

Exercises/Activities - Networking

ACTIVITY #1: Building a Network

1. Have each participant write down a few names of people they know personally in each of the preceding categories.

2. Next, give the following directions and have participants work through steps A to H.

   A. Choose 10 to 12 people from the list who would be the most likely prospects to be of help.

   B. Identify the kinds of help you need.
      - Information about job openings or employers?
      - Help in contacting particular people (making a phone call, writing a letter)?
      - Names of other individuals to add to your network list?

   C. Decide how to contact these people (telephone, letter and résumé, in person).

Source: *Workforce In Transition* by R. Floyd, J. Hoppin (Ed.), R. Sherer & H. Splete, National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, 1996.

D. Practise what you need to say to them. (Write a script.)

E. Make the contacts.

F. Follow up.
    - remind people you are still looking.
    - ask for more help with getting information.
    - keep them informed about your progress.
    - thank them for their assistance.

G. Repeat steps A to E as necessary, using additional people from your network.

H. Pay back or pass on the favour.
In the future you may be in a position to assist those who helped you. If not, you can still pass the favour on to someone else who may need assistance, perhaps to be part of their information network or job hunt support system.

Adapted with permission from Goodman and Hoppin (1990).

ACTIVITY 2: Keeping Track of Network Information

A network is meant to be "worked." This means repeated contacts will be made to network members. Therefore, it is essential to have some method of keeping track of contacts, both with the original network and with the expanded network as it grows.

Notebooks, 5"x7" cards or tickler files are all ways to keep track of network contacts, when they were contacted, the results of the contact and steps for follow-up. Below is a sample "tracking" card that can be used or adapted.

Source: *Workforce In Transition* by R. Floyd, J. Hoppin (Ed.), R. Sherer & H. Splete, National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, 1996.

Name of contact: Chris Johnson (on John's baseball team)
Address:
Phone no.: 555-2020

What I need: Information about openings at XYW Company

Date contacted: 10/23

Results: Got name of personnel director, okay to use Chris' name to talk about possible opening in warehouse. Called Ms. Jackson, she said send résumé and call her next week.

Follow-up: Called to say thanks and give update on progress. 10/25
Called John to do same - 10/26

Date contacted:

Source: *Workforce In Transition* by R. Floyd, J. Hoppin (Ed.), R. Sherer & H. Splete, National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, 1996.

THE INFORMATION INTERVIEW

Setting up the interview: The How? Step-by-step

Make sure participants understand the step-by-step process. The following are some suggestions:

1. Identify the job/career that you wish to learn about.
2. Decide on the information your would like. (Use the form to develop your questions.)
3. Select the person/organization that you will interview.
4. Make contact or set up an appointment in one of the following ways:
   - A. Write a letter and follow up with a telephone call.
   - B. Contact by phone only.
   - C. Contact in person.

5. Be prepared, arrive on time and dress appropriately.
6. After the interview, follow up by sending a thank-you letter.

After the information interview, arrange to debrief the participant. How did the information fit with previous research? Is the work environment appealing? What about the tasks? What is the employment outlook? Is this an area to further explore? Would they like to pursue this area? What would be the next step? How can this information be used in the job search process?

INFORMATION INTERVIEWING INOCULATION!

When discussing information interviewing, it is important to prepare or "warn" the group about some of the less positive responses they may receive. Some individuals may tend to take "rejections" personally.

It is important to stress that a rude or negative response: (a) has nothing to do with the "worth" of the individual doing the calling; (b) occurs for many reasons other than the nature of the call (the individual being called is particularly stressed by a deadline, or may have received many telephone calls in the same hour). Negative reactions can even be viewed positively! By discovering the person is "negative" or "rude" while talking to them on the phone, it's possible to avoid getting into situations where you are working under those same people on a day-to-day basis, face-to-face!

Source: *Knowledge for Youth About Careers* by R. Bradshaw & L. Prupas, International Provision Services Inc., 1993.

Make the distinction between information & job interviews

Make sure participants understand the difference between an information interview and a job interview. Explain that the chances of getting an appointment are greater with the former than the latter. Emphasize to them not to try to turn an information session into a job interview.

Sample: What to say

See the following to preview typical scenarios when calling to request information. This may be used with participants as a guide for preparing practice sessions.

Sample: Record of contacts

The following is a sample form which may be used by participants as is or adapted in order to track their contacts for information interviewing.

NOTE: The same form could be used to track contacts during a job search.

Conducting the interview The Who?

Deciding who to approach can be a challenge — suggest the following.

- To develop leads, start with your family, friends and acquaintances.
- Broadcast your interest and ask for names of people they know. It will give you a whole new level of contacts.
- Read the business sections of the newspaper and research the companies.

The What?

A structured form can be used to organize the information to be gleaned from the interview. There are many options to choose from here. Included in the following pages are several sample forms and lists of possible interview questions. You may wish to try one of these.

- Provide participants with one of the following forms.
- Develop a "hybrid" form for participants by drawing the most relevant questions from the samples provided.
- Brainstorm, as a group, possible questions and have each participant develop their own interview form.

Source: *Knowledge for Youth About Careers* by R. Bradshaw & L. Prupas, International Provision Services Inc., 1993.

INFORMATION INTERVIEW FORM

Frame your questions to gain the following information:

Occupation____

Job title (It may be different from occupation)____________________

Name of person______________________________________

Organization_______________________________________

Address and phone number______________________________

Years of employment__________________________________

Duties (tasks completed on a daily basis, occasional tasks)____________

Formal training (preparation required, education or training)___________

Previous work experience______________________________

Personal qualifications (skills aptitudes, temperament necessary)__________

Source: *Knowledge for Youth About Careers* by R. Bradshaw & L. Prupas, International Provision Services Inc., 1993.

Other specific requirements (union membership, licence, etc.)____________________

____

____

Physical working conditions____

____

____

____

People environment____

____

____

Earnings and other benefits (salary *range*)______________________________

____

____

Hours (number and schedule)____

____

____

Methods of entering the field____

____

____

Growth/advancement possibilities (necessary qualifications)____________________

____

____

____

Source: *Knowledge for Youth About Careers* by R. Bradshaw & L. Prupas, International Provision Services Inc., 1993.

INFORMATION INTERVIEW QUESTION

Name of Occupation, Field or Job You Are Interviewing Person About

1. What do you like MOST about this occupation or field, or job?

2. What do you like LEAST about it?

3. What kinds of training or education does someone need?

4. If you were going to do it all over again, what would you do differently?

5. Can you think of anyone else it would be good for me to talk to?

6. Would it be okay if I told them you suggested them as a contact?

Source: *Knowledge for Youth About Careers* by R. Bradshaw & L. Prupas, International Provision Services Inc., 1993.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT CONTACTS

Company/Organization Name: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________
____
____

Contact Person: ______________________________

Telephone Number: ________________

---

1. What products do you make? What services do you provide?
____
____

2. Who pays for them, and why?
____
____

3. How did you get started?
____
____

4. How much money can someone make in a business or organization like yours?
____
____

5. How many hours a week did you work at the start of this business/organization?
____

6. How many hours a week do you work now? ________

7. Any other comments?
____
____

Thanks for taking the time to talk to me!

Source: *Knowledge for Youth About Careers* by R. Bradshaw & L. Prupas, International Provision Services Inc., 1993.

A Few Suggested Questions for Information Interviewing:

- What do you do? (ask about specific aspect of job, to indicate sophistication)
- How did you get there? (contacts, strategies, timing, advice, decisions)
- What education/training have you had? (also, "What do others here have?")
- What do you like most/least about it? (values satisfied, barriers to satisfaction)
- General statements about your initial motivation? (e.g., "Always wanted to...")
- How did you decide to go for it?
- When and why did you decide to do this?
- Who helped you?
- What kind of person would you recommend goes into this? (field, occupation)
- How long have you been in this? (job, occupation, field, organization)
- If you were going to change direction now, how would you do it?
- What's it like for a man/woman in this field? (barriers, facilitators)
- Do men and women have different experiences in this occupation or organization? (discrimination, promotions, recognition, support)
- What's your sense of the future outlook for this occupation?
- What opportunities are there for advancement? (strategies, performance)
- How is___(work value) implemented in this? (job, occupation, field)
- What opportunities are there for expenses of_________________(needs) here?
- How would someone with___(personality, style) fit in here?
- What characteristics of this (job, occupation, field) promote satisfaction?
- What is the probability of this happening? (how often? depends on?)
- How likely is it that (activity you specify) would happen?
- How often might you have the opportunity to do (activity you specify) in this occupation, position or organization?
- What makes this (occupation, position or organization name) exciting/satisfying?
- What's your most memorable work experience?

Source: *Knowledge for Youth About Careers* by R. Bradshaw & L. Prupas, International Provision Services Inc., 1993.

- Where there any indications early in life that this would be a good career direction for you? What were they?
- What was it that made you think you could do it? (be outstanding at it, "succeed")
- What Holland types do you think would apply to this occupation, position or organization (e.g., Social, Investigative)?
- If you could do it all over again, what would you do differently?
- What advice would you give to someone considering this occupation or job?
- What are the opportunities for "Inner Child" expression in this occupation or job?
- If no clear career "path" exists, how do you advance in this occupation?
- When someone is being considered for this occupation or job, what are the relative weightings of:
  a) education/training?
  b) experience?
  c) personality
- How do you find work in a specialty of this occupation? (describe specialty or combination)
- What is the balance of leisure and work life like in this occupation or job?
- What are the opportunities for - home and family time?
  - ongoing study? or
  - community service?
- What opportunities does this work afford for a) regeneration (renewed energy)?
  b) corporate-sponsored training?
- How do you maintain an income while in transition between occupations?
- To what extent can you "be yourself" in this job? (norms, values)
- How are people treated in this? (job, organization, occupation)
- What are your supervisors "afraid" of? (threatened by, concerned about)
- Can you tell me more about your experience in this field? (in detail)
- Can you name a turning point?
- What did you do when the going got tough?

Source: *Knowledge for Youth About Careers* by R. Bradshaw & L. Prupas, International Provision Services Inc., 1993.

- What barriers did you encounter?
- How would your thinking have been different before you entered this field?

A good idea for debriefing this exercise is to ask those being interviewed about their levels of "confidence" in the interviewer's Adaptive/Self-Management Skills and Functional/Transferrable Skills (i.e., to what extent were these conveyed to the person being interviewed during the interview?). Several other points worth mentioning include these.

- The importance of **asking open-ended questions** (rather than "closed," "yes-no" queries);
- The importance of **being prepared** with information from printed resources (or contacts with competitors) before the interview;
- The importance of **having a list** of written questions in hand to refer to;
- The importance of **writing down answers** to questions, for later reference (this also indicates degree of interest in, and respect for, the person being interviewed); and
- The importance of **establishing rapport** with the person being interviewed (there is plenty of evidence to indicate that unless this is established (i.e., felt by the person being interviewed), there is little chance you will be offered either the best information and contacts, or the position for which you might be interviewing. Note: If you doubt this, just think about your own contacts with other people. How likely is it that you would hire somebody to work for you on a daily basis (in close, personal contact) with whom did you not feel you could get along?

Source: *Knowledge for Youth About Careers* by R. Bradshaw & L. Prupas, International Provision Services Inc., 1993.

Practice in Pairs

If participants are hesitant to do an information interview, suggest some practice interviews first. Having participants talk with someone they are comfortable with will lessen the anxiety and afford the opportunity to become more confident with the process.

Using their interview form, have participants work in pairs, taking turns interviewing each other about their current (or most recent) work. You may want to provide them with the following tips:

Practice field survey

Another good means of preparing for an information interview is by conducting a practice field survey. It allows you to get comfortable with the process in a relatively stress-free environment.

For a field survey, simply have participants choose something that interests them and arrange to talk with

Source: *Knowledge for Youth About Careers* by R. Bradshaw & L. Prupas, International Provision Services Inc., 1993.

someone who is knowledgeable in the area.

PRACTICE FIELD SURVEYS: GUIDELINES

1. It must be fun. The important point to remember is that practice field surveys allow you to talk with someone you do not know well in a low-stress situation.

2. It should be done with your leisure, hobby or some feature of the community about which you are curious, or some issue that concerns you.

3. Be enthusiastic about your topic. If you seem uninterested, then the person you are interviewing likely will be as well.

4. You do not have to do the interview alone. If you feel more comfortable initially, take someone along to help in the interviewing process.

5. If you don't know what else to talk about, you can ask:

    - how did you get interested in this?
    - what do you like best about it?
    - what do you like least about it?
    - what other person do you suggest I see?

DO NOT PRACTICE FIELD SURVEYS UNTIL YOU ARE COMFORTABLE WITH INTERVIEWING. THEN PROCEED TO INFORMATION INTERVIEWING.

Adapted from KYAC Career Modules Program for use in Colleges and Universities, by Rick Bradshaw, John Breen, Barbara Mandini and Lorne Prupas

As participants proceed to information interviewing, you may be an information resource, an advocate, and a support person. Remember to follow-up with participants after interviews and encourage reflective work in their journals.

Source: *Knowledge for Youth About Careers* by R. Bradshaw & L. Prupas, International Provision Services Inc., 1993.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Looking at the application or resume, employers can get a good idea about an applicant's background, experience and skills. This is the basis for bringing a candidate in for an interview. In the interview, however, employers are more concerned with an applicant's strengths and weaknesses. Often, employers will hire a person with less experience but the best personality traits (self-management skills). It is more desirable to hire someone who has a positive attitude, is punctual, and works well with others, than it is to employ a highly skilled individual who has more self-management weaknesses than strengths. Employers know it is easier to teach job content skills than to change personality.

Clients, therefore, need to identify their strengths, be capable of talking about them in an interview, and give specific examples of how they have used them. Likewise, it is important to be aware of weaknesses, develop strategies to change weaknesses into strengths, and convince employers that improvements are in progress.

There are several ways to assist clients in identifying strengths and weaknesses.

Exercises/Activities - Strengths and Weaknesses

ACTIVITY ONE: Strength Checklists

Almost all the job seeking materials we reviewed in preparation for writing this manual contained strengths or self-management skills checklists. These materials instruct the job seeker to check those qualities that are descriptive of them "often", "sometimes" or "rarely", or if they exhibit these strengths more than 50 percent of the time. It is important, however to match the strengths to the job. For example, the ability to work independently is more valued in a job with less supervision than in a highly structured work environment.

Shown on the next page is a sample chart listing a variety of strengths. It can be used and added to as you develop your own strengths checklist. You may want to add definitions of these strengths for clients who lack an adequate vocabulary.

ACTIVITY TWO: Strength Bombardment

Participants in a job search training program get to know each other well after a few sessions, particularly if the program provides opportunities for small groups and participant interaction. They are, therefore, helpful in identifying each other's strengths. Directions for a strengths bombardment follow the list of strengths.

Source: *Workforce in Transition: A Blueprint for Adult Career Development and Job Search Training*, Judith M. Hoppin, ed., Career Development Training Institute, Oakland University.

LIST OF STRENGTHS

accurate
adaptable
articulate
amiable
broad-minded
capable
careful
cheerful
confident
conscientious
cool-headed
cooperative
courteous
creative
decisive
dependable
determined
discreet
easy-going
efficient
emotionally stable
enthusiastic
flexible
friendly
generous
healthy
hard-working
helpful
honest
humorous
industrious
innovative
kind
logical
loyal
mature
motivated
observant
open-minded
optimistic
orderly
organized
outgoing
patient
people-oriented
persuasive
pleasant
positive
productive
punctual
quiet
realistic
reliable
resourceful
responsible
self-reliant
sensitive
sincere
smart
stable
steady
supportive
sympathetic
systematic
tactful
thrifty
thorough
thoughtful
tolerant
trustworthy
versatile

1. Post the strengths chart or provide each participant with a copy of the strengths list.
2. Give each participant a piece of newsprint; have them write their name at the top.
3. Put a heading on each side of the newsprint:

STRENGTHS I SEE	STRENGTHS OTHERS SEE

Source: *Workforce in Transition: A Blueprint for Adult Career Development and Job Search Training*, Judith M. Hoppin, ed., Career Development Training Institute, Oakland University.

4. Have the participants fill in the "Strengths I See" section with a list of strengths they see in themselves.
5. When they are finished, tape each newsprint to walls or doors. Have the trainers and participants circulate around the room to read the worksheets. Ask them to add strengths to the "Strengths Others See" column and put a star next to he strengths they have observed that are recorded in the "Strengths I See" box.
6. Each participant then reads his or her own list in front of the group - thereby "owning" their strengths.
7. These lists are then used for resume and cover letter preparation and interview practice.

ACTIVITY THREE: Observation and Feedback

People exhibit their strengths and weaknesses all the time, not just on the job. If you have clients in your programs over a short period of time, you will observe them demonstrating their strengths and weaknesses, how they perform the tasks necessary for job search preparation, the manner in which they relate to you and others in the program, and in basic personality traits that may help or hamper them in their job search and performance. Feedback is an important component of strength and weakness identification. Remember, the ability to offer effective feedback is a skill. It must be balanced. It is important to comment on positive behavior as well as behavior that needs to be improved.

ACTIVITY FOUR: Weaknesses That Are Situational

Every job seeker has weaknesses that may affect his or her ability to be hired. Some weaknesses are not self-management skills that need to be improved, but rather " situational " weaknesses that are not easily remedied or changeable. These can include circumstances such as age (too young, too old); a lack of exactly the right training, educational background or experience; an inability to speak the predominant language; having physical limitations, or a prison record. The important thing in handling situational weaknesses is to develop a strategy to deal with these liabilities in the most positive way.

Source: *Workforce in Transition: A Blueprint for Adult Career Development and Job Search Training*, Judith M. Hoppin, ed., Career Development Training Institute, Oakland University.

Backgrounder

VALUES

Values are often a measure of the commitment a person brings to a job. If the product or service involved coincides with one's values, then the energy one brings to a task is likely to be increased. A case in point is the energy and commitment some individuals bring to community service activities because they believe in the cause they are supporting or they are working toward bringing about something they value. Looking at values also helps people prioritize what role work plays in their lives. At a time when, with the addition of technology, the nature of the way we work is changed, jobs may cease to match one's values and commitment to the job may lessen as a result. As adults grow and mature, some of their values may change. Thus a job (or career) chosen at age 20 may not match the values that person holds at age 40 or 50.

Exercises / Activities - Values

ACTIVITY ONE: Twenty Things You Love To Do (Kirschenbaum, 1977)

Ask clients to write the numbers one through twenty on the left side of a sheet of paper. Then have them list twenty things they love to do. Give examples from your own experience. When the lists are completed, ask the participants to code each item according to selected factors, such as:

1. A dollar sign ($) beside any activity that costs more than $10.00.
2. The letter A next to things done alone; the letter P if done with other people, and AP if done alone or with another.
3. The letter D if data is involved in the tasks.
4. The letter T if some kind of object (equipment, tool, machine) is used.
5. The letter R if an element of risk is involved.
6. The letter N if not done in last three years.

Ask participants to total the number of items coded alike. Discuss the results and how they might relate to career interests and job choice.

Source: *Workforce in Transition: A Blueprint for Adult Career Development and Job Search Training,* Judith M. Hoppin, ed., Career Development Training Institute, Oakland University.

ACTIVITY TWO: Career Values Card Sort (Knowdell, 1991)

This is a quick, easy, fun activity to help clients prioritize their values. A deck of cards containing forty-one variables of work satisfaction such as: time freedom, precision work, public contact are sorted into five columns ranging from always valued to never valued. Cards in each column are prioritized and recorded. Participants can then discuss their career values and compare them to the content of past jobs or future career possibilities. Note: Card sorts are fun, non threatening, and flexible in their use. They are also available in foreign languages.

ACTIVITY THREE: Values Brainstorm

Conduct a brainstorming activity in which the individual client or groups of clients are instructed to call out their most important considerations when choosing an occupation.

Ask participants to then choose from the larger list the five most important considerations for them. Then have them list these values on a piece of paper or worksheet.

Discuss these values and how they apply to past jobs or activities and to future choices.

Source: *Workforce in Transition: A Blueprint for Adult Career Development and Job Search Training*, Judith M. Hoppin, ed., Career Development Training Institute, Oakland University.

Some people say it is impossible to do a good job unless your fundamental work values are being met. Other people disagree, saying that work values are only a small part of what makes a job satisfying.

Complete the following chart by writing your three most necessary work values in the first column. Then, at the top of the second and third columns, list two of your previous work experiences (summer jobs, co-op programs, part-time work, baby-sitting, volunteer work, or school activities). On a five-point scale in which 1 represents "*complete correspondence with work value*" and 5 represents "*no correspondence with work value*," rate each work experience in terms of the three values. Then, for each work experience, answer the question that is printed in the first column of the chart.

Work Values	Work Experience 1	Work Experience 2
• Were you satisfied with this work experience? • Why or why not?		

In your experience, what can you conclude about the relationship between work satisfaction and work values? Record your answer here.

Source: *Workforce in Transition: A Blueprint for Adult Career Development and Job Search Training*, Judith M. Hoppin, ed., Career Development Training Institute, Oakland University.

Exercises/Activities - Role Identification

ACTIVITY ONE: *Who Am I?*

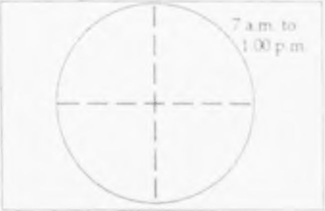
The purpose of this activity to to assist participants to identify the many roles they have filled throughout their lifetime.

1. Have participants brainstorm examples of roles. What is a role? (e.g. a role is a pattern of behavior associated with a certain position in society).
2. Share your own roles (i.e. friend, student, parent).
3. Have participants list their current roles, past roles, and roles they would like to have in the future.
4. Ask participant to share how many roles they currently have or have had; the kinds of roles they fill and their reactions, thoughts, what they learned about themselves through this activity e.g. responsibilities and rewards.
5. Discuss how change affects the roles in their life. For example, if I return to school, I may not have as much time to take care of aging parents, be with children, or participate in a leisure activity.

ACTIVITY TWO: *The Pie Of Life*

The purpose of this activity is to help clients gain insight into how they spend their time and give them an opportunity to prioritize their commitments. The exercise can be utilized on an individual basis or in groups.

1. Explain to clients the purpose of the activity: a) that they will be looking at how they spend their time and b) be given an opportunity to think about how they would like to spend their time.
2. Ask them to list the activities they usually do daily.
3. Draw a large circle on the board (or piece of newsprint) and divide into four quarters using dotted lines.



Source: *Workforce in Transition: A Blueprint for Adult Career Development and Job Search Training*, Judith M. Hoppin, ed., Career Development Training Institute, Oakland University.

4. Explain that each segment represents six hours. They may want to put times on each segment such as 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.. Ask them to estimate how long they spend in each activity and to draw slices in their pie to represent proportionately the part of the day they spend on each activity.

5. Next ask them to reflect on:

   A. Are they satisfied with the relative size of their slices?

   B. What would be the ideal size of each slice?

   C. What steps could they take to work toward that ideal?

Source: *Workforce in Transition: A Blueprint for Adult Career Development and Job Search Training*, Judith M. Hoppin, ed., Career Development Training Institute, Oakland University.

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.
Oliver Holmes

Strengths and Assets

CHAPTER SIX

This chapter presents a method of using client stories with groups and individuals. It is written primarily for facilitators wanting to use the approach with groups of students in a classroom setting or with clients in group counselling. You will note that directions are provided for facilitators/counsellors who are working with groups. When working with individuals you will need to adapt this to suit the needs of your specific clients.

The use of narratives in counselling and educational settings is gaining widespread attention. Student and client narratives can be used to gain access to ways they perceive themselves in the past, present, and future. From a narrative perspective, the development of a person's self-identity can be conceptualized as an issue of life-storying and client problems can be seen as stories that have gone astray.

Stories can also be used to help students and clients to gain access to some of their strengths and assets. By relating two or three stories, they can begin to see patterns and themes in their lives and quite often gain new insight into how they actually made choices in shaping their experiences. They can see that their life is not just a

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, 1994.

series of haphazard events but a series of crossroads and junctions that they have played a major part in selecting. Life, then, is seen as full of opportunities and choices when viewed from a storied perspective.

A formal program to help people benefit from recalling previous stories or experiences was developed. This program, named the Dependable Strengths Articulation Process (DSAP), is a technique used to help clients to uncover their strengths and assets that they have minimized or that are beyond their level of awareness. These strengths and assets, referred to as Dependable Strengths, are defined as "skills, talents, and other qualities that have been developing over one's lifetime, from childhood to the present, and which, when used in combinations, enable one to do certain things well, with a sense of satisfaction and pride" (Forster, 1989). The technique relies heavily on the client's ability to recall past stories or experiences and then to describe them to others. Initially developed by Haldane, Haldane & Martin (1984) and Haldane (1988), it was then expanded upon and further researched by Jerald Forster at the University of Washington.

The Dependable Strengths process is founded on the authors' observation that too often society focuses on what is wrong instead of what is right. From this premise, it is further assumed that this so-called "negative tilt" to society has detrimental effects on people who fail to meet the standards that we, as a society, have determined for achievement and excellence. The DSAP was developed based on the following assumptions, as stated by Forster (1989):

> 1. Individuals are complex and unique because of the wide range of possible qualities and the many ways these qualities can interact with each other.
>
> 2. Modern society is also complex and offers a wide variety of environments which support diverse types of people. In other words, people can vary widely and still be successful in a complex society.
>
> 3. Individuals who are different from each other can thrive in a common environment where diversity is acknowledged and cooperation is fostered. In these environments, individuals can concentrate on using their strengths and supporting others whose strengths may be based on different skills and qualities.

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

> 4. A person's self-identity depends upon the particular qualities attended to by the person when the individual is aware of his/her self. These qualities are perceived through the lens or filter of the individual's personal constructs.
>
> 5. The qualities that are valued most become those used by the person to evaluate self. Self-esteem is related to how positively the person evaluates self in relation to these valued qualities.
>
> 6. If a person rates self poorly on valued qualities, that person will have low self-esteem and will strive to change with respect to those qualities. However, if the person makes little progress evolving in the desired direction, that person may change the qualities that are valued, or come to accept self as a person who is failing or at least doing poorly. If this sense of failure is accepted and becomes the person's primary self-identity, the individual is likely to act in ways that are self-destructive, counterproductive or antisocial.
>
> 7. If the person rates self highly on valued qualities, that person will have high self-esteem and continue to seek growth and mastery in known as well as new areas. A person with high self-esteem has energy for extra efforts and therefore seeks challenge and self-improvement. (p. 7)

Based on these assumptions, Forster recommends that as counsellors it is preferable: 1) to emphasize actualization of potential rather than deficit, 2) to participate with the client in the construction of self-knowledge through experiences rather than imposing on the client a "curing of pathology" and finally, 3) to encourage clients to experiment with novel behaviours in keeping with newly discovered ways of knowing rather than adopting a linear problem-solving approach.

The Dependable Strengths Process has broad applicability for diverse populations such as adolescents seeking employment, women returning to the workplace, and various other individuals experiencing worklife transitions. Increased self-esteem was reported for a variety of clients following the DSAP (Forster, 1992).

The full DSAP can be delivered in a number of formats; for example, eight weekly sessions or a two day workshop. For the purpose of counsellor education, the method has been abbreviated and altered. The abbreviated version that follows focuses on the application of Dependable Strengths in counsellor education. In educating counsellors, the process helps learners: 1) to listen to the client's story; 2) to listen for themes and patterns; and 3) to listen for the alternate story (one that is

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

strength-building and not problem-saturated); and 4) to facilitate the empowerment of clients. A step - by - step process for using an adaptation of the Dependable Strengths Process in group settings follows.

Learning Activity

Rationale

Often clients seeking career counselling have difficulty drawing on their strengths and assets while: 1) determining career goals; 2) writing resumes; and, 3) preparing for job interviews. If they have been unsuccessful in the past in any of these endeavors, they tend to be particularly reluctant to promote themselves. The Dependable Strengths Process helps them to uncover their taken-for-granted strengths and assets by telling their story of a "good experience." In training situations, participants have opportunities to practise listening to "client's" interpretations of good experiences; thus engaging in processes of building and identifying strengths.

Purpose

To introduce the learners to a process through which they uncover their own strengths and assets.
To enhance the learner's awareness of the listening required to engage in the client's story.

Ends-in-view

Learners practise attending to the client's story by listening for phrases, metaphors and themes.
Learners experience the benefits of building on strengths instead of deficits.
Learners reflect on the applicability of the Dependable Strengths Process in various settings.

The version of Dependable Strengths presented here consists of three steps: 1) Introduction, 2) Role-Play, and 3) Sharing "good experiences". "Facilitator directions" describe the process of implementation that may be used with

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

individuals or groups. "Facilitator dialogue," in italics, describes instructions to the participants. It is important to remember that the version presented here is relatively brief compared to the original design of the program. For strengths and assets to be dependable, they need to be drawn from more than one "good experience." However, this abbreviated version acts as an introduction to the fuller program as well as a method for teaching various competencies.

Step 1 Introduction

FACILITATOR/COUNSELLOR DIRECTIONS

By posing the following questions, learners have an opportunity to reflect on their experiences of helping clients to build on strengths. Some learners will have a lot of experience in this area; others will have very little. Acknowledging experiences of the learners will 1) validate their own experience in working with clients; and 2) help them to relate this approach to others they may have used.

FACILITATOR/COUNSELLOR DIALOGUE

I am going to introduce you to the Dependable Strengths Process. The process takes approximately three hours. Before beginning, have any of you worked either individually or in group settings where you concluded that the participant(s) needed to enhance their self-esteem? Or where participants felt incapable of writing a resume because they were convinced they had no skills or strengths? Or felt incapable of pursuing a job because of lack of confidence? What strategies did you use? What were some of the specific skills you utilized?

FACILITATOR/COUNSELLOR DIRECTIONS

Using the information presented at the beginning of this section, briefly introduce the program to the learners covering the major points as follows:

- Purpose of the process
- Background information
- Assumptions of the counselling process

Define and discuss the following terms by writing on the board or flipchart.

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

Dependable Strength

A "dependable strength" is a skill, talent, or quality that has been developed over a lifetime, from childhood to the present, and which, when used in combination with other strengths, enables one to do certain things well.

Good Experience A "good experience" is defined as a time when:

1. You did something well.
2. You enjoyed doing it.
3. You felt proud of it.

Some discussion of the definitions may occur. An important point to emphasize is that the participant should be encouraged to reflect on experiences that he/she perceived as "good" and not how others might have perceived the experience.

Step 2 Model Interview

FACILITATOR/COUNSELLOR DIRECTIONS

Ask one of the learners if they would be willing to volunteer for a brief interview. Have them recall an experience they had when they enjoyed doing something, did it well, and felt proud of it. Instruct the volunteer to be as detailed as he or she can and be prepared to spend about fifteen minutes describing the experience. Ask questions which facilitate the telling of the story in order to model this process for the learners (as demonstrated in the following interview). Before the volunteer begins his or her story, instruct half of the class to listen for positive strengths, qualities, and skills that she or he would have used immediately preceding the "good experience." Suggest to the learners that they may want to record some of the strengths. Instruct the other half of the class to observe and record the kinds of competencies used by the counsellor during the interview.

> **HINTS:** Reflective listening, attending behaviour, and various kinds of questioning all help the volunteer (client) to describe the experience. In order

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

to gain more information, encourage the client to be as specific as possible. Elaborating the details of the experience will not only help the client to re-live the experience but will also help the listener (counsellor) to draw out the strengths.

The following transcript of a counselling interview is for facilitators to review prior to engaging in a live demonstration with learners. It is helpful to get a sense of how the "client's" story unfolds by posing specific questions.

Counsellor: Can you tell me about an event in the past which you would label a "good experience?"

Client: Anytime in my life?

Counsellor: Any time in your life. You can go back fifteen years or you can go back to last week or whenever you would like. If you can just describe an experience for me and try to give me as much detail so that I can get a clear picture of what that experience was like for you.

Client: The experience I'm thinking of happened when I was about 8 years old. What I did was I wrote a stage version of Alice in Wonderland's Mad Hatter's Tea Party. In other words, I scripted it from the book and I sort of blocked it and I drew in the other kids from the neighborhood and produced it. We sold tickets and invited all the other neighbors and families from around. We then lined up all the chairs and put on this production for everyone.

Counsellor: That sounds wonderful. So you actually wrote out the script and did all the planning. (Pause) I wonder if you can recall some of the steps you went through to get this off the ground?

Client: Well, I was very excited about theatre at that point. I had seen a number of productions by the time I was eight years old. I had actually had a few roles in amateur theatre productions and so theatre was part of my life. I was wild about theatre so what I did was I got this inspiration to adapt

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

a story that I had read. There was quite a bit of dialogue in the story so it was quite easy to do but I sort of added and elaborated some of the dialogue and made it more interesting, at least I thought so. So that's the first thing I did is that I took the unit out of the book and more or less filled in more of the dialogue according to my vision of what it would look like and sound like on the stage.

Counsellor: So first of all you had an idea or a concept of what this production would look like and then you started to write out the script.

Client: Yes, a concept of what it would like to begin with. I wrote it out in a little notebook with all the physical movements they would have to use because I knew about blocking and what they would have to do. I can just remember the feeling so vividly about being wildly excited about the whole endeavor. So the next thing I remember was trying to get the other kids to be as excited as I was and trying to convince them about how much fun it would be. We could all work together and rehearse and work on the costumes together. I convinced them that working together could be so much fun.

Counsellor: So you began by trying to get them just as excited as you were?

Client: Yes, I even told them that we could probably make a little money.

Counsellor: That's always a good incentive! (laugh)

Client: So we had several rehearsals and one of my best friends, Shirley, played the part of Alice. She was just perfect. She even looked just like Alice in Wonderland with her long honey-coloured hair. She was pretty and all that kind of stuff. There weren't that many characters actually. There was Shirley, the doormouse, and there was . . . help me out here I can't remember.

Counsellor: I'm amazed that you can remember as many as you can.

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

Client: And there were the other kids who weren't in the production but were there to build things. I made a list of things that had to be done like building things and scrounging things from their parents and I would assign kids to try to run around collecting these things.

Counsellor: So once you got to that stage, then what happened? What about the actual performance? Can you describe some of the details?

Client: Um...let me see. Well once we felt we knew our lines, and we rehearsed it several times. We did a lot of drilling to learn the lines. I was really central to the whole thing. I had to keep everything going it seemed (laugh).

Counsellor: So they'd fall apart without you.

Client: Of course, they were just kids and at times they would want to just play Cowboys and Indians, but I was committed to the show going on. And then we sent out invitations and explained that they would be charged admission at the door (laugh). So we divided up the neighborhood and tromped around delivering all these invitations by hand and then quite a few people came. We borrowed chairs and some people just sat on the grass.

Counsellor: So, quite a few people came. It sounds like it was a great success?

Client: Well I don't think the production was nearly as successful or not nearly as fun as the whole process of doing it . . .that is planning it and so on.

Counsellor: So you really enjoyed the build up and all the planning.

Client: Yes, that was it. The planning and the creating. Watching something come together, the creative process. Watching something come together out of nothing was quite exciting for me.

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

Counsellor: Yes, I can tell by the way your face lit up that the creative process is what you really enjoyed. So after the production the excitement was still there for you.

Client: Yes, after that I got into musicals and variety shows. I did a Christmas variety show that was really exciting.

Counsellor: Well thank you, Sharon, for sharing your good experience with me.

Once the volunteer is finished relating his or her experience, ask the learners to brainstorm for strengths the client would have revealed. Write these on the blackboard or flipchart. If a strength is mentioned more than once, put a check mark beside it. (This affirms the strength for the client in that he or she can see that more than one person identified that particular strength). When the class is finished identifying strengths, ask the client to share what it was like to hear some of the feedback. For example, did she feel embarrassed, encouraged, proud? Encourage the client to share feelings, reactions, and thoughts about doing the exercise.

FACILITATOR/COUNSELLOR DIALOGUE

To the client:

What was it like for you to relate a previous "good experience"? What feelings, thoughts, or reactions do you have to telling your story?

To the class:

I would like you to brainstorm for skills, strengths, and abilities that the client used during his or her "good experience" and I will list them on the board. If a strength is mentioned more than once, I will put a check mark beside it to indicate to the client that the strength was identified by more than one person.

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins; Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

Strengths Used During the Experience

organizational skills
creativity
responsibility
perseverance
sustained enthusiasm
thoroughness
focused
attention to detail
knowledge of theatre
application of knowledge
ability to improvise
people skills
ability to aspire others
motivational skills
leadership skills
verbal and written ability

HINTS: Once the strengths have been listed, it is important to process the experience with the volunteer client to provide some closure to the exercise. Following is an example of a debriefing process.

FACILITATOR/COUNSELLOR DIALOGUE

To the client:

How do you feel right now?
What its like for you to see all of your strengths and assets listed in front of you?
If you could put all your modesty aside for a moment, how would you say those qualities fit for you right now?
In what ways do some of the strengths and assets feel familiar to you?
In what ways do they feel alien to you?

HINTS: Sometimes "clients" experience a sense of loss for unfulfilled dreams and perhaps potential. These feelings may come up and should not be minimized. Comparing what they were then with what they are now can be upsetting. Be prepared to deal with some of these issues and allow for time to process some of the feelings that surface for the storyteller.

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

To the class:

What competencies did you observe the counsellor using?
In what ways did the counsellor contribute to the "telling of the story"?"

Some of the kinds of competencies used by the listener or "counsellor" will be:

Specificity: Encourage the client to be specific by asking questions such as:

> *Can you tell me exactly how you planned the event?*
> *What were some of the circumstances which led up to the good experience?*
> *In what ways did you contribute to the experience being "good"?*

Encouraging: I can tell by the look on your face that it was a very exciting time for you. Can you tell me more about it?

Recording strengths: When a strength is mentioned, it is alright to reflect it back to the client; however, try not to become preoccupied with identifying strengths at this time. Listen, instead, to the client's story. You may find it helpful to jot down some of the strengths and assets on a piece of paper.

Listening: Convey to the client that you are truly understanding her experience by helping her to elaborate and produce more details.

HINTS: Some learners or clients may have difficulty recalling "good experiences". If this occurs, encourage them to choose events that perhaps were not extraordinary but were actually quite normal. As long as they meet the definition of a good experience, they are appropriate. For example, planning a camping trip, making a soccer team and so on.

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

Step 3 Preparing Learners to Share Experiences

FACILITATOR/COUNSELLOR DIALOGUE

I would now like you to relax and find a comfortable position. Close your eyes if you feel so inclined and begin to centre yourself. Recall a time in your life when you had a good experience. This may have happened in early childhood, in your teens, or some other time. A "good experience" is defined for our purpose as a time when you did something well, enjoyed doing it, and felt proud of it. Do not think about how someone else might have perceived your experience either in the past or right now. This is your "good experience" and belongs to you alone. We are not here to judge one another but to share some of our positive experiences. You may want to scan a few of your good experiences before deciding on one that you would like to share with other learners. Once you have selected a good experience, you may want to sketch a picture that reminds you of your experience or jot down a few notes to hold it in your memory. Use whatever you need to do to remember. I'll give you about five minutes to relax and remember before regrouping.

Now that you have selected your "good experience," get into groups of four. One person will be the storyteller or "client", one will be the "counsellor" and the remaining two will be observers. Each learner will have approximately 25 minutes for his or her turn (15 minutes to relate the story and 10 minutes to receive feedback).

To the client: *Be prepared to be as descriptive as you can while relating your good experience. Allow for about fifteen minutes to tell your story.*

To the counsellor: *Remember to ask the kinds of questions that will encourage the client to elaborate his or her experience.*

To the observers: *As observers, you will need a separate piece of paper to record the emerging strengths and assets. Your paper will be given to the client at the end of the session (after observations have been discussed as a group).*

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

HINTS
If the learners are inexperienced in interviewing, you may need to give examples of the kinds of questions that facilitate elaboration of stories. For example:

Tell me more about . . .?
How did you feel at the time?
Who were you with?
How old were you?
What were you thinking at the time?
How exactly did you do this?

They may also need to be reminded to ask questions in a non-obtrusive way so that the questioning does not detract the speaker from his or her experience.

As observers and counsellors you will be required to write down skills, aptitudes, and strengths the client would have used during his or her experience. Being able to listen and take notes at the same time can be distracting but with practice this will become easier.

Once you have listened to the first "client's" good experience, each group member will have a chance to report the strengths that stood out for him or her. Once all of the group members have had an opportunity to report on strengths they identified, each participant will give his or her list of strengths to the client so that they can leave the class with their own list.

PLENARY

Once each learner has been a counsellor, client and observer, bring the large group back together and pose the following questions:

What was it like for you, as a client, to talk about your "good experience"?
As a counsellor, what did you find was helpful in encouraging your client to tell his or her story?
How did you feel when you were given your list of Dependable Strengths?
Was it easier to identify someone else's strengths rather than your own?
In what ways could you use this process in your counselling practice?

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

What other implications for counselling can you identify?

COUNSELLOR REFLECTIVE EVALUATION

Competencies
Ability to listen credulously to the client's story
Listening for strengths and assets
Promoting personal power

Reflect on your counselling practice session or listen to your tape and from your own perspective, respond to the following questions. Record 1) whether or not the competencies were conveyed and 2) if so, how?

1. What are some of the advantages of listening carefully to the client's story?

2. What challenges, if any, did you face when following your client's story?

3. From your own experience of being listened to, what thoughts, feelings, and new insights came up for you?

4. How would you imagine using Dependable Strengths with individual clients?

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

Mapping

CHAPTER SEVEN

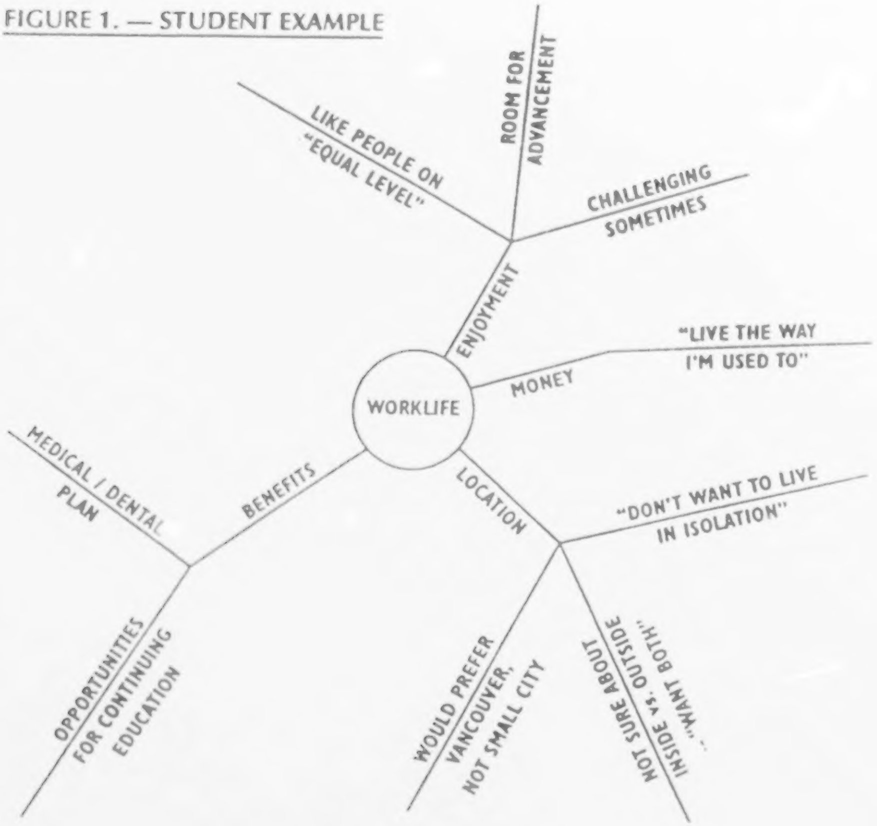
This chapter presents a step - by - step process for completing a career map. The process is described as a group process to be used with students in classroom settings or with clients in group career explorations. In addition, the process of mapping can be adapted to individual counselling once the overall process has been learned.

A conceptual map is a representational depiction of ideas and underlying meanings embedded within a framework of assumptions. Deshler (1991) states that: "Concept maps provide a summary of what we say we believe, think, feel, or value at a particular point in time" (p. 336). Concept maps facilitate the process of taking linear cause - and - effect information and transforming it into a more wholistic and inclusive graphic representation. Through this process learners are provided with

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

opportunities: 1) to examine, 2) to confirm or disconfirm, 3) to evaluate, and 4) to perceive information or experiences in new ways. Figure 1 is an example of a student's map created in response to questions pertaining to the most important aspects of their future worklives.

FIGURE 1. — STUDENT EXAMPLE


WORKLIFE
ENJOYMENT
LIKE PEOPLE ON "EQUAL LEVEL"
ROOM FOR ADVANCEMENT
CHALLENGING SOMETIMES
MONEY
"LIVE THE WAY I'M USED TO"
LOCATION
"DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN ISOLATION"
WOULD PREFER VANCOUVER, NOT SMALL CITY
NOT SURE ABOUT INSIDE vs. OUTSIDE "WANT BOTH"
BENEFITS
MEDICAL / DENTAL PLAN
OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Conceptual mapping in research and education has recently gained recognition in the field of curriculum development. Novak, Gowin and Johansen (1983), Cardemone (1975), and Minemier (1983), have all applied conceptual mapping to

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Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

contexts of higher education. Chaffe (1988) has also used conceptual mapping as a technique for promoting critical thinking. In counselling, the application of conceptual mapping was researched with novice and experienced counsellors to document their conceptual understanding of the change process in counselling (Cummings et al, 1990).

Conceptual maps help learners to explicate their taken-for-granted assumptions upon which they make certain life choices, plans of action, interpretations of experiences and so on. Conceptual maps have a way of bringing forth or explicating the "objective world and the intersubjectivity of our life-world within that of society" (Deshler, 1991, p.350). Deshler further states:

> The explicative capability refers to our paying direct attention to language itself in an attempt to clarify the validity claims offered to us through our external sphere (natural events and facts), our social sphere (rightness of the rules governing relations between social actors), and our inner sphere (personal desires, wishes, and needs); and to reflect on, question, and reconstruct the language that we use to constitute reality. (p. 351)

Language plays an important role in the mapping process. Language itself is the key to uncovering the personal meanings associated within a concept and between the various concepts that come together to make up the unique realities of individuals. Perhaps the most significant learning that occurs through the mapping process arises from the dialogue that describes how one concept is linked to another. Thus, in counselling the client's map becomes the catalyst for further discussion and uncovering of personal meanings.

Dialogue helps to prevent linear and circular thinking and brings taken-for-granted realities into awareness. In this way, validity or what is referred to in this curriculum as 'viability' among assumptions can be examined. Dialogue also makes the negotiation of shared meanings possible (Deshler, 1990), however, it is only useful when it is critically reflective. This critical reflection occurs when time is spent examining the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and values embedded within the relationships of the parts of the map. Using the map illustrated in Figure 1 as an example, a counsellor could pose the question: "What is it that you prefer about working with people who are on an 'equal level'?" The student is then

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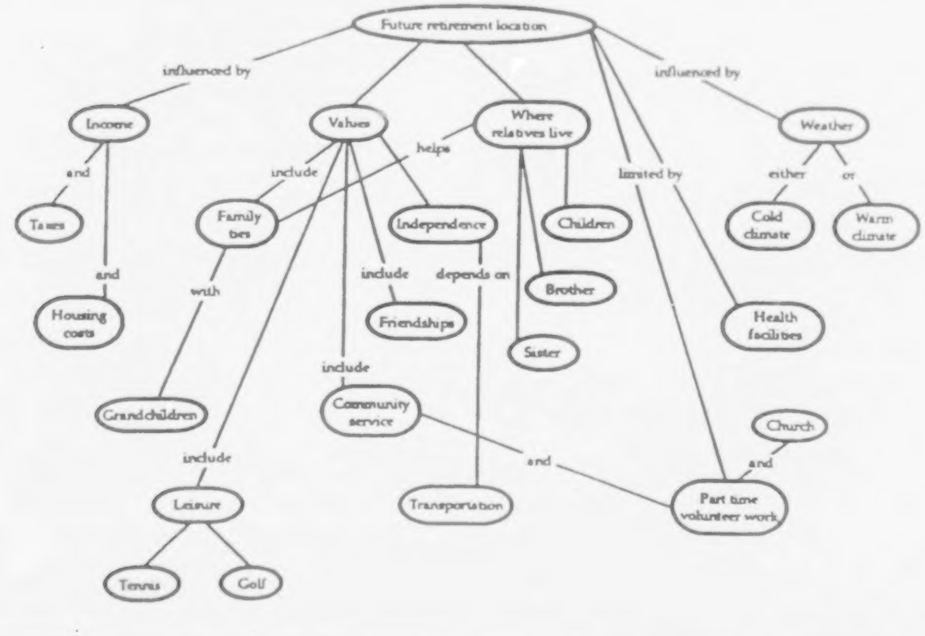
Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

encouraged to elaborate on the meaning of the value of being "challenged by colleagues." Counsellor and client then explore the relationship between concepts of "being challenged sometimes" and "working with challenging colleagues" as well as the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and values, relating to those concepts that have significant meaning for the client.

The process of mapping consists of linking ideas and patterns in a systematic way. Drawing a conceptua map requires the individual to perform the tasks of: perceiving, symbolizing, describing, classifying, generalizing, interpreting, conceptualizing and defining. Mapping helps people to make sense of their worlds and to deepen their understandings. When referring to conceptual mapping, Chafee (1988) states: "As we actively discover and compose various patterns, what we are really doing is exploring the ways in which different aspects of our experience *relate* to each other" (p. 251).

There are vast differences in the complexity of conceptual maps, determined in part by the intention and the ability of the person creating the map. Some are rather

FIGURE 2. Reconstructed Concept Map on Choice of Retirement Location. (Deshler, 1991)


Future retirement location
influenced by
influenced by
Income
Values
Where relatives live
Weather
and
Taxes
and
Housing costs
include
helps
Family ties
with
Grandchildren
Independence
depends on
Transportation
include
Friendships
include
Community service
include
Leisure
Tennis
Golf
Children
Brother
Sister
limited by
Health facilities
either
or
Cold climate
Warm climate
Church
and
and
Part time volunteer work

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

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simplistic, such as the one illustrated in Figure 1; others are more inclusive and complex (Figure 2). Whatever the complexity, for the purpose of mapping career issues, it is important that the map be treated as a 'tool for exploration' and not as a finished, detailed depiction of conceptual understandings.

Conceptual mapping may be applied in counselling in a variety of ways both individual and group and has multiple possibilities when used for the purpose of enhancing understanding of self and others. Participants are given opportunities to create an initial map from what they currently know, referred to as "prior knowledge" (Ausubel, Novak, and Hanesian, 1978). After engaging in a dialogue aimed at facilitating critical reflection, participants revise their initial maps. The reconstructed maps often reduce conceptual gaps, "contradictions, inconsistencies, circular thinking, unattached concepts and invalid conclusions" (Desnler, p. 345).

In counselling practice, the concept of mapping is a useful strategy for the following purposes: 1) to help the counsellor and client to learn more about the ways in which he or she construes self and others, 2) to engage in the process of explication of beliefs, values, and assumptions, 3) to gain clarity regarding various issues such as worklife, relationships, and so on, and 4) to link their beliefs, values and assumptions to career issues. **In counsellor education,** mapping provides learners with a visual representation of the client's construal of self and/or of career exploration issues. Learners, therefore, have opportunities to visually observe how clients link concepts together to create meaning for themselves. "Counsellors" also have opportunities to practise applying critically reflective questions during the discussion of the client's map, and in so doing, become a co-participant in the reconstruction of the new map. In a sense, the client's map creates a window through which the counsellor can gain access to the client's beliefs, values, and assumptions.

The first part of the learning activity which follows focuses on the client's mapping of aspects of self; the second part focuses on mapping more specific career issues.

Source: *Constructivist Career Counselling: A Participant Guide*, Marie Hoskins, Pacific Institute of Counsellor Development, University of Victoria, Victoria: BC, 1994.

COMMENTS

Positive Uncertainty: A New Decision-Making Framework for Counseling

H. B. Gelatt
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Changing one's mind will be an essential decision-making skill in the future. Keeping the mind open will be another. Positive uncertainty helps clients deal with ambiguity, accept inconsistency, and utilize the intuitive side of choosing.

Over 25 years ago the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* published an article of mine entitled "Decision Making: A Conceptual Frame of Reference for Counseling" (Gelatt, 1962). In the article I presented a totally rational approach to making decisions. The approach required decision makers to define their objectives clearly, analyze information rationally, predict consequences, and be consistent. A compatible frame of reference for counseling was then constructed.

Now I have changed my mind about decision making. In my opinion, what used to be the way to decide, no longer is. Decision making is not what it used to be, or at least the way we view decision making is not. This means that the old counseling frame of reference ought not be what it was. Modern counselors, like modern physicists, are looking at a different world. Today physicists have had to give up their previous ideas about the order of the universe. The new order, the basis of the new physics, is not to be found in the particles of matter. Rather, it is found in the minds of physicists. What one observes appears to depend on what one chooses to observe. The order of the universe may be the order of our minds, and the mind is where decision making occurs.

Quantum physics is showing that there is no such thing as a physical world "out there" (Gleick, 1987; Wolf, 1981). There is no such thing as objectivity. Everything is interconnected to everything else in an unbroken wholeness, and the mind is the connector. But can there be a new science of this new order? Can psychologists have a new psychology of counseling and decision making? Counselors may have to give up some previous ideas about order in decision making—or at least be willing to take on a new perspective. Albert Einstein once said: "Creating a new theory is not like destroying an old barn and erecting a skyscraper in its place. It is rather like climbing a mountain, gaining new and wider views, discovering unexpected connections between our starting point and its rich environment" (Zukau, 1979, p. 19).

It is in this context that I write about a new strategy for making decisions and a new framework for counseling. The new view of the decision-making world does not mean destroying the old approach and erecting a completely new one. It means discovering new connections between the old view and new insights. There is one more caveat before I begin. It is said that "the master's house will never be rebuilt by the master's tools." It may be impossible to construct a new counseling framework if psychologists insist on using only the tools of the old model.

A quarter century ago the past was known, the future was predictable, and the present was changing at a pace that was comprehendible. The rational, objective decision-making frame of reference for counseling was appropriate then. Today the past is not always what it was thought to be, the future is no longer predictable, and the present is changing as never before. In fact, today even the status quo is in a state of flux. If everything is changing, ought not the strategy for decision making and the counseling frame of reference be changing? I believe the answer is yes.

Therefore, I am now proposing a new decision strategy called *positive uncertainty*. What is appropriate now is a decision and counseling framework that helps clients deal with change and ambiguity, accept uncertainty and inconsistency, and utilize the nonrational and intuitive side of thinking and choosing. The new strategy promotes positive attitudes and paradoxical methods in the presence of increasing uncertainty.

This is not to say that classical decision theory or rational decision strategies of 25 years ago, including my own, were wrong. They are simply no longer sufficient for today's complex, changing world. Rather, this is to say that theories can change and even theorists can change their minds. Changing one's mind will be an essential skill in the future.

The old and new decision making is like the old and new science. The past laws of science and a knowledge of the present gave persons an ability to predict the future. It showed an external world that existed apart from the mind. It had scientific objectivity. The old decision strategy was appropriate for the linear, objective, scientific methods of the past. The old decision dogma relied on the left brain, pursued certainty, and asked for consistency.

The new science has shown that in some cases it is not possible, even in principle, to know enough about the present

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to make a complete prediction about the future. Science learned that it is not possible to observe something without changing it. Observers cannot eliminate themselves from the picture. Reality is a subjective creation in a personal frame of reference. The new decision strategy uses the whole brain, accepts uncertainty, and asks for flexibility. The new decision approach is appropriate for the quantum scientific methods of the future.

Positive uncertainty is not the first or only attempt to break away from the scientific, rational model of decision making in counseling. For example: Janis and Mann's (1977) conflict-theory model emphasizes the client's belief system regarding risk taking and proposes emotional role playing and outcome psychodrama as two counseling techniques; Krumboltz (1983), in discussing unfounded, troublesome, and deceptive beliefs, said in his preface, "One outcome of my study was the decision that it is irrational to distinguish between rational and irrational decisions" (p. ix). He suggested that the extent to which a given choice is rational or irrational depends on the point of view, including the beliefs and private rules, of the person judging it. Harman (1981) said that societies have one major decision-making problem: "poor choosing based on a wrong belief system" (p. 5). From 14 propositions of an emerging science of human consciousness, Harman concluded that "a rationale for good choosing" (p. 5) is choosing with the creative–intuitive mind.

Other decision theorists have continued to study the human problem of dealing with uncertainty. Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky (1982), in their review of the influence of cognitive psychology on judgment research, discussed such topics as the role of subjective probability, the psychology of prediction, popular induction, the illusion of control, and improper linear models among others. Their goal, however, was to find ways to help clients become more rational.

Modern information society concepts and techniques were integrated into human decision making by Heppner and Krauskopf (1987). They discussed an information processing approach and described personal problem solving more as a complex, intermittent, and highly interactive process of coping than as a logical decision-making process: "We conceptualize real-life problem solving as involving the rational and irrational, conscious and unconscious processes, as well as cognitive, affective and behavioral processes" (p. 376).

Heppner and Krauskopf (1987) then related this conceptualization to the complexities of the various characteristics of different problems and to the variety of personality differences among individuals. If one adds the systems view that everything is connected to everything else, one can understand why Ackoff (1974) called human problem solving "mess management" (p. 21) or why March (1975) introduced "The Technology of Foolishness" (p. 424) as a decision-making approach to balance the technology of reason.

The business literature also has recently acknowledged and promoted nonrational, intuitive decision making for managers. A change in attitude has occurred over the last 10 years as a nonrational deciding process in business has been described first as "muddling through" (Golde, 1976) and now as "creativity in business" (Ray & Myers, 1986).

Heppner and Krauskopf (1987) noted that a lot of research has already examined how people make decisions, and they called the conclusions pessimistic: "People are often quite unsystematic and irrational" (p. 376). My point in reviewing this literature is to suggest that the time may be right for a new approach to decision-making counseling. Should counselors help clients be more systematic and rational in decision making or help them be better at unsystematic, nonrational choosing? Or should they do both? Scientists and businesspersons are seeing their world differently. Can counselors?

The analogy of old and new science with old and new decision making is a good one because uncertainty is at the heart of the new science and also of the new decision making. However, the new does not make the old obsolete. The new discoveries have shown the limits of previous theories and knowledge. The old way of looking at things is no longer comprehensive enough. Counselors need a broader view of decision making that utilizes the decision maker's nonobjective role and incorporates the constant presence of uncertainty. Counseling can then help clients do more than seek certainty and avoid subjectivity.

With the positive uncertainty techniques, I am not actually proposing a new decision strategy but proposing to make commonly practiced strategy legitimate and part of a counselor's repertoire. Decision making is a nonsequential, nonsystematic, nonscientific human process. So is positive uncertainty. Three basic positive uncertainty decision guidelines are ambiguous and paradoxical. So is life in the information society. The three guidelines (not rules or laws) come from my new definition of decision making: Decision making is the process of arranging and rearranging information into a choice or action. There are three parts to the definition: (a) information, (b) the process of arranging and rearranging, and (c) a choice of action. All three of these parts have changed.

Today, clearly the amount and availability of information has changed. The process part of arranging and rearranging, which happens in the decision maker's mind, is still the crucial part for counselors. But now there is new knowledge about this processing in the mind from computer technology, artificial intelligence, brain research, and the power of mind in self-healing and personal growth. Psychologists know more about rational thinking, but they also know more about the importance of intuitive thought. The processing skills of decision-making clients (and counselors) need to come from both sides of the brain; they need to be ambidextrous and multifaceted.

The third part of the definition, choice, also requires a change. Helping someone decide how to decide must move from promoting only rational, linear, systematic strategies to recommending, even teaching, intuitive, situational, and sometimes inconsistent methods for solving personal problems or making decisions.

Does it seem paradoxical to be positive (comfortable and confident) in the face of uncertainty (ambiguity and doubt)? Yes. But that is exactly what a person will need in order to be a successful decision maker in the future. Space does not permit a full description of all of the potential decision strategies and counseling techniques in positive uncertainty, but

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the three basic guidelines related to the three parts of the definition of decision making (information, the process of arranging and rearranging, and the choice) are outlined briefly.

Information Guideline: Treat Your Facts With Imagination, but Do Not Imagine Your Facts

De Bono (1985) wrote "If you had complete and totally reliable information on everything, then you would not need to do any thinking" (p. 46). If one had such information, one could go directly to choice without passing through the process part. The process of arranging and rearranging information is thinking. In an information society a lot of thinking is required. The new decision theory and counseling approach recognizes three problems with information today.

First, facts rapidly become obsolete. (Reliability is limited.) How long are the right facts true? What one knows for sure today may not be so tomorrow. The rapidity of change in today's society makes the tenure of knowledge very capricious. What one often learns today is that what one learned yesterday is no longer true. It has become misinformation.

Second, more information equals more uncertainty. (Complete information is rare.) Today one can get more information and faster than ever before. But the amount of information available almost always exceeds a person's capacity to process it. This, together with the fact that one can know more possible options and know about more possible outcomes, increases uncertainty. The more one knows, the more one realizes what is not known. Like an iceberg, two-thirds of knowledge cannot be seen.

Third, there is no such thing as innocent information. (Subjectivity is present.) The new science has confirmed that most information is changed by the process of sending or receiving it. The sender or receiver is very likely to modify information. What information is sent and received and what it looks like depends on what is already in the mind's eye of the beholder. The mind's eye is the mental faculty of remembering and imagining. It determines what one sees and knows. Knowing how to get acquainted with one's mind's eye is a good skill to have.

This new counseling framework must help clients understand that what they know is ambiguous, that their knowledge is the tip of the iceberg, and that information is appraised in the mind's eye. Getting the facts is still part of decision making and counseling, but counselors must now realize that the most important part is the client's attitude about these facts and how they are arranged and rearranged in the client's mind to formulate a choice. Clients need to learn to be uncertain about what they know and to seek other, even different, information or opinions. As Mark Twain once wrote: "It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble, it's what you know for sure that ain't so."

Counselors ought to help clients to use their mind's eye creatively yet cautiously. Using information to predict the future and to prepare for what is predicted is likely to be supplemented with skills in avoiding information overload, recognizing information inadequacies, and rearranging information into various possible futures. This provides opportunities for creative remembering and imagining.

Process Guideline: Know What You Want and Believe but Do Not Be Sure

The new approach changes the decision maker's attitudes about decision goals and rational objectivity. What the decision maker wants are considered decision goals. The old decision theory and counseling approach to goal setting can be summarized as: "If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else" (Campbell, 1974). I have a corollary to this principle: "If you always know where you're going, you may never end up somewhere else." If you always know what you want, you may never discover new wants. How do people decide on good goals, and how do people make good decisions? These two answers should not be incompatible.

Decision making should be as much a process for discovering goals as for achieving them. March (1975) presented support for this approach: "The argument that goal development and choice are independent behaviorally seems clearly false. It seems to me perfectly obvious that a description that assumes goals come first and action comes later is frequently wrong" (p. 420).

What the decision maker knows is considered *rational objectivity*. The new science should make it clear that the rational, objective approach is not always possible or desirable. The client's mind's eye is the heart of invention; it is where reality is created. A balance between fact and fancy is needed. If one cannot always be totally objective, one ought to know sometimes how to be thoughtfully subjective.

"Be realistic" was the old counseling advice. Self-deception and denial were the great sins to be avoided. Counselors now know that it is not always a disadvantage to believe what appears to be unreal. The new approach recognizes that denial (refusal to believe the facts) and illusion (false beliefs about reality) have their usefulness in coping. One's beliefs are spectacles; they cause a person to see things a certain way. When persons change their beliefs, they change their spectacles; they change what they see, hear, know, want, and do. Beliefs determine how one behaves. The paradox is that denial and illusion can be signs of pathology or can provide hope and motivation to act.

This new counseling framework must help clients avoid the most common problem caused by the old decision theory: pretending one already knows what one wants. It is not so much a question of should one really know what one wants, but should one be encouraged to develop new wants? Always starting with clear objectives discourages a person from making choices that lead to new experiences. New experiences help develop new information, new values, new goals, and new wants. Being uncertain about goals and wants leads to new discoveries. Remember, "The only thing worse than not getting what you want, is getting it" (George Bernard Shaw).

Counseling, in the future, will also need to help some clients develop their subjectivity and challenge and change their convictions. It takes courage—and counseling—to challenge

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and change one's own beliefs. This may be an essential skill of the future. The most important part of the clients' future may be their belief about it. The old framework gave a lot of practice remembering the past but not much experience imagining or creating the future. Remember, the client's mind's eye is the mental faculty of remembering and also imagining. Beliefs about the future begin here. Harman and Rheingold (1984) sum up the importance of belief: "Each of us has the capacity to become much more than we think we can be, if we choose to stop believing otherwise" (p. 16). Our decisions today are an expression of one's beliefs about tomorrow. In other words, one's choices today not only determine one's future, but they also reflect what one believes the future to be.

Cousins (1981) wrote about self-induced healing, and many other writers and researchers have recently pointed out the power of beliefs, among them: Goleman (1985), who discussed the thin line between "vital lies and simple truths"; Borysenko (1987), who wrote about "minding the body and mending the mind"; and Zilbergeld and Lazarus (1987), who described techniques for helping clients use their "mind power."

The process of arranging and rearranging, in the mind's eye, is where reflection, imagination, and creativity take place. These are the new decision-making skills of the future. The counselor of the future must help clients learn the importance of these skills, practice using them, and integrate them into their decision-making strategies.

Choice Guideline: Be Rational, Unless There Is a Good Reason Not to Be

The old decision theory and counseling approach taught you to decide the rational way. It was not logical to use any process that was not logical. Although counselors knew people did not always decide rationally, they thought it was the best way. After all, the science of the time was totally rational.

The new decision theory and counseling approach, supported by a new holistic approach to science, a creative approach to business management, and an imaginative approach to medicine, now shows that decision makers are part of their decisions. One cannot separate the decision from the decider, just as one cannot separate the observed from the observer. Holistic choice means using the right brain as well as the left, reflecting on one's future as well as one's past, and being flexible in decision strategies. The process of how the decision makers decide is as important as the facts, truths, and realities about the choices.

Support for this balanced deciding approach has come from many sources: Capra (1982) integrated Western and Eastern approaches to psychology and psychotherapy; Bruner (1986) explained the "narrative mode," the part of the mind devoted to the irrepressible human acts of imagination that allow one to make experience meaningful; Zdenek (1987) showed how imagery can change perceptions and help one "invent the future"; Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) discussed the power of human intuition in an era of the computer in what they call "mind over machine"; von Oech (1986) provides "a kick in the seat of the pants"; and de Bono (1985) gives us "six thinking hats" to help us think and decide more creatively.

Counselors will be helping clients remember and imagine, reflecting backward and forward. Persons need to be able to learn from their future as they have learned from their past. Counselors will also be helping clients develop flexibility. Flexibility, like reflection, is a two-way skill. It involves being capable of responding to change and being capable of creating change. Responding to change may mean changing old habits. Creating change may mean inventing something new. Positive uncertainty makes both easier to do.

The new counseling framework of reflection, flexibility, and both rational and intuitive thinking will lead to inconsistency in choice. One cannot be flexible, adaptable, and inventive and always be consistent. The future does not exist and cannot be predicted. It must be imagined and invented. There are two choices: One must invent the future or let someone else invent it. The choice of action is where the decision makers express their individuality; it should not be done by formula. The counselor of the future must help clients imagine and invent their own future.

Summary

Decision making is the process of arranging and rearranging information into a choice of action. Positive uncertainty is a new decision strategy with some paradoxical counseling methods, but it is basically attitude—feeling uncertain about the future and feeling positive about the uncertainty. Attitude is important in winning games, getting a job, recovering from illness, and climbing a mountain. Therefore, it is not surprising that attitude is important in making decisions.

Positive uncertainty is compatible with the new science and beliefs of today's society and incompatible with yesterday's decision dogma. It involves ambiguity and paradox because the future is full of ambiguity and paradox. In the future it will help to realize that one does not know some things, cannot always see what is coming, and frequently will not be able to control it. Being positive and uncertain allows one to be able to act when one is not certain about what one is doing.

Decision making has been hard to do by using the conventional wisdom of the past. Even with all the scientific formulas, sophisticated technology, and eloquent theories, making up one's mind has been difficult. Rational strategy is not obsolete, it is just no longer sufficient. We do not need new dogma, just new decision tactics. The mind of the client, the focus of positive uncertainty, will be the next great frontier. Outer space gets all the attention lately, but inner space (the human mind) will be the new arena for exploration.

The counseling profession ought to take the lead in continuing to explore this arena with new and creative research and theory development. Counselors may also need to be willing to validate the new exploration by developing some new tools. If they only use the old tools, such as comparative research and empirical testing, they may not be able to build a new model. Counselors may become, as Thoreau said, "tools of our tools."

The main purpose of counseling has always been to help people make up their minds. Now counselors can add helping

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people keep their minds open and even teaching them how to change their minds. The best final decision may actually be a definite maybe.

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